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THE OLD THEOLOGY
IN THE NEW AGE

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THE OLD THEOLOGY
IN THE NEW AGE

BY

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To
MY WIFE
IN LOVE

*"Love is the greatest thing that God can give us ;
for Himself is Love ; and it is the greatest thing we
can give to God ; for it will also give ourselves and
carry with it all that is ours."*—JEREMY TAYLOR.

PREFACE



IT seems to be an axiom with modern preachers that published sermons always need an apology ; possibly this may be because a sermon is more or less an apology in the true meaning of the word.

Professor Harnack, in his "Lecture on the Essence of Christianity," says that "the theologians of every country only half discharge their duties if they think it enough to treat of the Gospel in the recondite language of learning and bury it in scholarly folios."

Now while making no claim to be a theologian, and very conscious of my own limitations and imperfections, I have tried in the following sermons to fulfil the neglected half of the theologian's duties. I have tried to interweave the best "Forward thinking" of

the age for the instruction of my hearers, with the conviction that the theology of the schools must become the ethics of humanity; and in so doing I have become the "Middleman" between the professed theologian and the congregations it has been my privilege to address both in Bayswater and in Hampstead.

The sermons in this volume were written for delivery, and although it is generally acknowledged that the written word should differ somewhat from the spoken word, in this case I do not think that any useful purpose would be served by attempting to disguise the fact that this is a volume of sermons.

I disclaim originality; therefore it is unnecessary for me to specify my obligations to the acknowledged masters of theology to whose inspiration is due anything that merits attention in these pages.

G. F. TERRY.

St. James' Day, 1904.

“O Lord God of Truth, I humbly beseech Thee to enlighten my mind by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may discern the true way to Eternal Salvation ; and to free me from all prejudice and passion, from every corrupt affection and interest that may either blind or seduce me in search of it.

“Make me impartial in my enquiry after truth, and ready whenever it is discovered to me, to receive it in the love of it, to obey it from the heart, and to practise it in my life, and to continue steadfast in the profession of it to the end of my days.

“I resign myself, O Lord, to Thy conduct and direction, in confidence that Thy mercy and goodness is such that Thou wilt not suffer those who sincerely desire to know the truth and rely upon Thy guidance finally to miscarry. And if, in anything which concerns the true worship and service of Thee, my God, I am in any error and mistake, I earnestly beg of Thee to convince me of it, and lead me into the way of truth, and to confirm and establish me in it daily more and more.”

Private prayer of ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

"We will joyfully accept modern science and loyally follow it; but there remains a still higher flight, a higher fact—the eternal soul of man. . . . To me the crown of scientism will be to open the way for a more splendid Theology, for ampler and Diviner songs."

WALT WHITMAN.

*"Truth is large! our aspiration
Scarce embraces half we be:—
Shame, to stand in His creation
And doubt Truth's sufficiency!—
To think God's song unexcelling
The poor tales of our own telling!"*

*O brave poets! keep back nothing!
Nor mix falsehood with the whole:—
Look up Godward; speak the truth in
Worthy song from earnest soul:
Hold in high poetic duty
Truest Truth the fairest Beauty."*

E. B. BROWNING.

"The wisest of critics is an altering being, subject to the better insight of the morrow, and right at any moment only 'up to date' and 'on the whole.' When larger ranges of truth open, it is surely best to be able to open ourselves to their reception unfettered by our previous pretensions."

W. JAMES,

"The Varieties of Religious Experience."

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. OUR DUTY TO THE PAST	I
II. OUR DUTY TO THE PRESENT	19
III. GOD'S EXISTENCE	41
IV. GOD IN JESUS CHRIST	59
V. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT	79
VI. THE CHURCH	93
VII. THE SACRAMENTS	117
VIII. THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL	145
IX. EPIPHANY IN MIRACLE	163
X. PRAYER	189
XI. LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE	203
XII. PROGRESS IN THE TRUTH	217
XIII. THE GOSPEL OF SONSHIP	233
XIV. ATONEMENT	247

I

OUR DUTY TO THE PAST

*"All things are ever God's : the shows of things
Are of man's fantasy and warped with sin ;—
God, and the things of God, immutable."*

ALLINGHAM.

*"The ONE remains, the many change and pass ;
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly⁹²*

SHELLEY.

*"The past will ever win
A glory from its being so far,
And out into the perfect star
We saw not when we moved therein."*

*"Out of the shadow of the night
The world moves into light
'Tis daybreak everywhere."*

LONGFELLOW.

I

OUR DUTY TO THE PAST

"Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the bit whence ye are digged."—ISA. li. 1.

THE great problems which confront the religious world of to-day may be briefly stated thus:—

How shall the Church preserve her own past, and yet at the same time meet the wants of the present?

How can she hold the Faith delivered to the saints of bygone ages, and at the same time find room for the Faith delivered to the saints of to-day?

Let us note first that these questions are the recurring problems which force themselves before men in every transitional stage of the history of religious thought.

To prove that the opening of this century is a transitional age I need only quote the words of Professor Bonney,¹ one of the foremost thinkers of the day: "We are witnessing the opening of another epoch of change, which will rid the Reformed Church of sundry narrow ideas and some superstitions, the heritage of older days, which, after a long slumber, have recently awakened to a strangely and lamentably vigorous life. But their hours are numbered. Touched by the Ithuriel spear of truth, viewed in the clear, if somewhat cold, light of science, their real nature will be revealed. Many a fair form will disclose the ugly visage of latent paganism, and the bright robe of symbolism will be changed into the rags of idolatry and the talisman of Shaman."

Now in Religion, as in Literature, Art, and everything else, we naturally look for the "survival of the fittest." To-day, as in the apostolic times, we are called upon "*to prove all things and to hold fast that (and that only) which is good.*"

So our primary duty as followers of the

¹ Bonney, "Old Truths in Modern Lights."

Master Jesus Christ, is to make our faith reasonable to the living minds of to-day—reasonable first to our own reason, and then to the reasons we seek to influence.

Christianity has claimed to be rational from the day when S. Paul first encountered the philosophers of Athens ; from the earliest times it has ever been ready to prove at the bar of reason its intrinsic superiority to all rival speculations on the mystery of things.

Looking back over the ages we find all the early apologists appealing fearlessly to reason ; the great Christian Fathers, Cyril and Ambrose, the first great teachers of Theology, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, Athanasius and Augustine, the Schoolmen, the Reformers—all appeal to reason, for it was their conviction that “To seek the reason of things is to seek God.”

And with this truism in view, the Anglican Church of to-day seeks no better fortune than a candid examination of her credentials ; she asks for no literary or critical privilege ; she claims no exemption from the ordinary processes of scientific inquiry.

“To the test of reason,” Bishop Butler says,

"the evidence of Revelation itself must be submitted." If our faith be not reasonable, if it be not historical, it is far worse than useless—it is reactionary and false.

Therefore let us understand very clearly that no sort of authority can keep alive for long what the intellect dooms to death, for to be authoritative authority must be rational; and thus those periods of history which we fondly call ages of faith, simply are those ages when faith satisfied reason.

In the process of the centuries the dogmas of the faith were turned into legal documents, the acceptance of which was to be for all time the test of Churchmanship. However useful such a theory may have been for excluding heretics, it was altogether unscientific. Religious symbols cannot be treated in this manner without danger of separating the symbol from the thing symbolised. Such treatment makes them become "dead facts," and as such they must inevitably follow the nature of all dead things, they must decompose and vanish.

Now if to understand the past is to possess it, it will be our deepest wisdom, while sifting

it in the light of to-day, to recombine for our present use all that which is indestructible and essential in it.

Hence while we cherish and realise the value of much that is old, we must also be ready to give hospitality to the new, and to make room for it in the garner of the soul.

Our question therefore is, How shall these two contrary elements of fixity and change be harmonised in order to fit the religion of Christ for future needs ?

Here I think the old prophet Isaiah supplies us with the right keynote ; he was a statesman as well as a prophet, high in the favour of his king and countrymen, and mainly instrumental in shaping their policy at a critical period in Jewish history.

As Prof. Sayce remarks, " By his counsel and action as well as by his prophetic words he did much towards preserving the life and nationality of Judah at a time when, had it been wiped out, there was little likelihood of its ever reviving. Humanly speaking, had it not been for him, that remnant would never have been saved which two centuries later

became strong enough to survive the Babylonish exile and make ready in the Jewish Church and people for the birth of the Messiah."

It was chiefly to the encouragement and advice of Isaiah that the Jewish nation owed its continued existence, and, uttered as they were by a statesman, his words warn us in this age against the fatal error of attempting to guide the destinies of our fellow-men, without reference to the traditions of the past. "*Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.*"

If the Church of Christ is to help the world towards that purer, simpler, and happier life which in the world's best moments it is prepared both to admire and to seek, she must look back to "The Rock," must re-learn the value of "first principles," must put the message of Christ Himself before the intricacies of a correct Christological Creed.

Let us, therefore, first emphasise the fact that all forward movements in the Christian Church have had a backward look; it seems

as if the new aspect of truth, for which men hungered, always came to them by the revelation of the past ; so that progress might ever be identified with a deeper penetration into the old truth and its richer appreciation.

Many to-day imagine that "modern thought" is hostile to Christianity because, as Dr. Illingworth says, "for the most part they are only acquainted with modern thought, and we over-estimate the 'modern thought' of to-day, simply because, in our ignorance of history, we under-estimate that of the past."

The memorable saying of Pascal that "humanity is a man who lives and learns for ever," suggests a standard by which we can measure the progress of our Faith all through the past ages.

The Christian Church has always acted on the principle that the old prepares the way for the new.

The Church of England has ever made her appeal to the past ; she refers in the preface of her Prayer Book to the "godly and decent order of the ancient Fathers," that is to say,

to the methods of the Primitive Church. This attitude was well expressed by the late Bishop Creighton when he said that the distinguishing characteristic of our Church was her appeal to sound learning.

It is an historical fact that pre-Reformation worship largely lacked the element of intelligence. The Creed was supposed to be symbolised by the ritual; but the symbolism was not explained, and the doctrines that were most zealously taught were not the articles of the Catholic faith at all, but accretions which had accumulated in times of ignorance.

Consequently, in the sixteenth century our Reformers had to face the problem of disentangling essential truth from the mass of individual opinion which had gathered around it, and they did this by affirming the principle expressed in our Article VI. that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation"; by which

it will be seen that our Reformers refused to incorporate into the Church doctrine any individual speculation, or to go beyond the words of Scripture; their object was not to create but to restore.

It is our proud boast that the English Reformation was not a revolution; it did not renounce the past, but it adapted it to the wants and knowledge of the age.

The Reformers appealed to the past for present guidance, and, as I think naturally, we must make the same appeal to-day; that it is old is the first claim of the old to our respect.

As we look over the history of our English Christianity we can see that the old faith has stood the test of time; it has been the means of life and light and strength to successive generations of men. It has so woven itself into the hearts of men that the Church of England is an integral part of the history of England. It has been an important factor in that type of character which has placed the Briton in the first rank of civilised nations. It has been the making of "that true English ideal of a serious-minded, resolute, independent

man, loving justice, making for righteousness, and strong in the love of God.”¹ It is a grand thing to be the possessors of such an ideal.

The transmission of such a heritage unimpaired should be the great concern of our lives; however much we may feel it our duty to improve our patrimony, we must not fail in gratitude to our forefathers for that which they have bequeathed to us; thus it behoves us never to disparage the past, but rather to examine it and accept it as a stimulus to use to the uttermost the opportunities of the present. For we are disloyal to our Church and her undutiful sons if we withhold our strength and love from her improvement.

We only insult the great thinkers of the past if we accept their ideas as final; it is in this particular that the appeal to the past makes it clear that while Christianity in its essence survives all the storms of time, yet

¹ Cf. Morley's "Gladstone," introductory chapter, p. 3. "Mr. Gladstone cared as much for the Church as he cared for the State; he thought of the Church as the soul of the State; . . . and he was sure that the strength of a State corresponds to the religious strength and soundness of the community of which the State is the civil organ."

Christianity in its form changes from age to age; for—

“what are forms?

Fair garments, plain or rich and fitting close
Or flying looselier, warmed but by the heart
Within them, moved but by the living limb,
And cast aside when old for newer—forms.”

The judicious Hooker well says, “There was never anything by the wit of man so well devised or so sure established which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted.”

In the Creeds of the Christian Church we can indeed *look unto the rock whence we are hewn*, for in them we have a vast structure of truth and wisdom, from which we can obtain the spiritual experience of men of genius in matters of religion; and while the ancient formulæ bind us to the life of the past, the new interpretation which the age demands permits the free course of continuous Divine revelation and the Divine Education of the Spirit.

But a further claim of the past rests upon the consideration that it is not prudent to throw away the old without sure security of

something better, and on this point also I am very sure that the framework of the old creeds is still sound and strong, for the old contains the essential truth.

We cannot suppose that the phases of later theology, however true, are of the essence of Christianity unless we are prepared to say that Jesus and His disciples never taught Christianity at all.

Our Creeds preserve the normal authoritative sources of truth just as the growing body preserves the sources of life—they contain the corporate reason of the Church exercised on the highest existing knowledge.

The All-responsible Fatherhood of God, the Divinity and humanity of the Son, the great redemptive work of our Saviour, the ever-present reality and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the glorious hope of Future Life, these are the expressions of essential and eternal truth, and on these fundamentals we shall see that what is popularly called the New, is simply the attempt at a more perfect expression of the Old.

To-day the New is returning to the Old, for it is returning to Christ Himself, and we may,

if we will, see how all the previous movements have been preparing its way.

In the past age, each successive revival of Church life, the Evangelical, the Tractarian, the Liberal, added something to the idea of God, each touched something in our complex nature which the others were unable to reach. The Evangelical awakened the individual conscience, the Tractarian aroused the imagination, the Liberal enlisted thought and reason on behalf of religion; yet each of these movements drew its inspiration from the past, and in so doing forced men back to Him, in whom all have their origin.

How many "Lives of Christ" have been written in our own generation? And yet the conviction is growing that it has not yet been thoroughly written; for it is the living Christ of to-day whom the world needs rather than His material expression of nineteen centuries ago.

Surely in this fact alone lies the hope that Christ is beginning to live in modern life as He has not yet lived since He walked the earth in human form; and in the power of His life, we may well trust that the religious differences

which now distinguish, will no longer divide or separate us, but that the ideal unity of many men of many minds will gradually shape itself into actual existence. For the world is looking as it never looked before unto the Rock of Ages, even Christ Himself.

Lastly, the appeal to the past braces and invigorates our spiritual life. For from it we learn how the first Christians conquered the world.

We have only to name the colossal powers which were arrayed against the infant Faith: the enmity of Judaism both within and without the fold, the awful persecutions of the Pagan world, the rise of conflicting opinions amongst the Christians themselves, the invasion of wild northern barbarians, the peril from Moham-medan fanatics, the corruptions of the Papacy.¹

These and countless other foes were met, not by despairing withdrawal from the busy haunts and marts of men, not by isolation in selfish security, not by force of arms or personal violence, but by patient and gracious influence of holy lives and lofty faith.

The early Christians were themselves a

¹ Cf. Dean Farrar's, "Witness of History to Christ."

living gospel, a message of God's goodwill to those with whom they toiled and suffered; pure amongst the self-indulgent and licentious, tender amongst the fierce and brutal, meek amongst the vainglorious and boastful, joyous in hope amongst the sorrows of a decadent race, they revealed to men their true destiny and showed how it could be attained; and the secret of their success must be the secret of our success. For, as Bishop Westcott so truly said, "it is not first by material change, not by intellectual culture, but by spiritual sympathy that our work will be done."

Let us, therefore, while looking to the past for courage and inspiration, take to ourselves the counsel of Divine fellowship:—

Fellowship with God and man—fellowship with man in God—

"Let us draw near unto the throne of Grace."

"Let us hold fast the confession of our Hope."

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works."

And it will not be long said that the victories of the faith are ended.

II

OUR DUTY TO THE PRESENT

T
"Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
Not master'd by some modern term ;
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :
And in its season bring the law.

Meet is it Chances should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease :
We all are changed by still degrees,
L All—but the basis of the soul."

TENNYSON.

"It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so ;
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step, when I recall
That if I slip, Thou dost not fall."

CLOUGH.

"The criticisms of the present day will at first be felt, as a blow to faith, but they will issue in its fuller establishment ; all that is important will survive."—B. JOWETT.

"In the attrition of theological thought, the harvests of centuries are ground up, and in the winds of discussion a good deal of chaff is blown away. But the elements of the bread of life still remain, and the world was never more hungry for it than to-day."—EMERSON.

II

OUR DUTY TO THE PRESENT

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me."—ACTS i. 8.

MATTHEW ARNOLD well expressed the modern spirit when he wrote: "An age which has its face towards the future, and in which men are full of plans for the welfare of the world, is not an age which has lost its faith. Its temper of mind is constructive; it is eager for new institutions, keen for new ideas, and has already a half-belief in a future in which all things will be new."

With these hopeful words ringing in our ears, let us attempt to face the religious problems of the present age.

Men are certainly asking ^{to-day} as they have never asked before, whether Christianity is competent for the task that it has undertaken to do,

and it is for us, in whom the Christian Church is at this moment partially embodied, to give an answer to this question, and to declare fearlessly that the Christian faith, and the Christian manhood, can supply the world's needs.)

(The Catholic faith is a religion of facts, not of speculations. For Christ is His own religion, Christ is Christianity. But it is sometimes forgotten that Christianity appeals to the entire manhood for its acceptance; to the intellect no less than to the heart and conscience.

It is now generally acknowledged that the twentieth century Christian can only think the thought of the twentieth century; hence it is a delusion to think that we men of to-day can hold quite the same belief as the Christian of the first century or the Christian of the sixteenth century.)

Mr. A. J. Balfour has done good service in making ~~this~~ plain to Churchmen, that Religious Knowledge is subject to the same change and development as all other knowledge.)

("The fact that theological thought follows the laws which govern the evolution of all

✕ "The Foundations of Belief."

other thought, that it changes from age to age, largely as regards the relative emphasis given to its various elements, not inconsiderably as regards the substance of those elements themselves, is a fact written legibly across the pages of ecclesiastical history."* *foot-note 2*

(Bearing this truism in mind we shall understand that the measure of the present vitality of our religion is its power to readjust its conceptions, and to readapt its institutions to their environment.)

(The religious teacher of to-day must be ready to bring out of his treasures things new as well as old ; he must never be weary of translating into the current idiom the thoughts of old, but he must also be ever ready to welcome the fresh voices of later wisdom.)

(And while in no way disparaging the partial formulæ in which men of old expressed their faith, we must beware lest we regard our own view of truth as final.)

(It is always well for us to realise how little we know or can know, apart from Revelation, of the things that are really important, yet we believe that God gave us reason as a means to an end.)

The purpose of reason is to lead us to faith ; and it is the function of faith to help us at the point where reason fails, ~~yet~~ faith itself implies a reasonable belief in the existence of God.

The ultimate purpose of faith is to prompt us to conduct. It has been beautifully defined as "confidence manifested by conduct," and it is by conduct alone that we can truly witness for Christ in this age ; but the springs of conduct must be brought to the test of reason.

Now while we may at once admit that it is easier to assert truth, than to examine and verify it, I am persuaded that this latter is an important witnessing work which God is putting before the Church of to-day. >

~~The~~ That grand old word "Protestant" is not always to be used for one who protests, or whose work is negative. It is, as the etymology of this noble but much ill-used word signifies, "to bear witness for," to give a solemn declaration of truth, and it appears as if we were destined to reduce to practice the issues and hopes of the long years which have gone before.

And if this be so, it is useless to sit with folded hands waiting for God's light to break; we cannot hope to enjoy the splendours of a fuller and purer light without enduring the pain which necessarily attends the removal of the veils by which it was obscured. As Bishop Westcott so truly said, "Gain through apparent loss; victory through momentary defeat, the energy of a new life through the pangs of travail; such has ever been the law of spiritual progress."

But so long as the mass of Churchmen are convinced that everything should and must develop except Religion, so long as they break the first commandment by idolising the ignorance of centuries gone by, and make the standard of mediæval sensualism the criterion of the religious ideas for the twentieth century, so long will they fail in their great vocation and defer the mighty end to which the Christian Church ought to be tending, namely, the Christianising of mankind.

Ruskin once said (that the greatest thing a man could do, was to see something and tell the others what he sees) and surely the Gospel, as Christ gave it, was a gift to the

"The greatest thing a human soul can do in this world is to see something, and tell what it sees in a plain way."

seeing power in all men, for all Christian theology is the result of thought and reflection upon the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Our creeds, valuable as they are, remain but the tabulated result of what at some given time that life and that teaching were understood to be, and they need to be constantly readjusted and restated to meet the progressive wants of the age.

“For the spirit has risen
From the hard, narrow letter which kept
Men’s thoughts in a prison,
Where they struggled or languished or slept;
And now we can soar high above
All the Creeds, but the Credo of Love.”

The theology of Christianity has doubtless been the outcome of the union of Greek and Eastern minds with the Divine life of Christ. This we know first took place at Alexandria, in the early centuries when the students of Platonic philosophy were converted to the Faith of Christ crucified, and a school of Christian philosophy was founded under the Fathers Clement and Origen, which resulted in the welding together of the element of wisdom with the element of worship. Hence-

forth our Christianity has, and must have, a philosophy; but the moment it is treated merely as a philosophy its idea and meaning perish. >

< Yet, as Hegel says in one of his letters, "Philosophy seeks to apprehend by means of thought the same truth which the religious mind possesses by faith," and this we know is profoundly true, for however much Philosophy and Religion are matched in conflict they press toward one common goal; the one, however, moves through reflection, the other through emotion, for the central, vital principle of Religion is Love—love as manifested in the Incarnation and Life of the Saviour—and this principle alone is permanent alike in Philosophy and Religion.

But surely it is not for us to set limits to this progressive development and to say that what was legitimate in the fourth century is wrong now? Surely God has not ceased to teach the hearts of His faithful people by the sending to them the light of His Holy Spirit?

"It is not incredible," says Bishop Butler, speaking of the Bible, "that a book which

has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered." ¹

"If that spirit," said Bishop Thirwall, "by which every man spake of old is for ever a living and present Spirit, its later lessons may well transcend its earlier."

If the Christian faith took new forms when it came in contact with Greek thought, we may confidently hope that it will go on, from strength to strength, till knowledge shall vanish into the perfect sight of Love Divine.

The late Bishop Creighton well said, "that the great danger of the present day is lest the aspirations of the highest minds, profoundly Christian, and profoundly moral, should desert all ecclesiastical systems, because they are unable to move freely and face the real work which they are called upon to do. . . ." and this danger, he further adds, "is intensified by ignoble struggles about matters of detail, conducted without reference to great principles."

Doubtless the men of this age find it hard to believe that their human reasoning faculties

¹ "Analogy," part ii. chap. iii.

are limited and imperfect, and it is humiliating to their pride to be reminded of this fact in face of the marvellous material discoveries and inventions of the age; yet infallibility is not to be found in anything human.

When all has been said that can be said about the arguments by which we justify our faith to ourselves, it is, I think, apparent that no amount of argument will ever give us Faith; otherwise there would be no merit in Faith.

There is no merit in assenting to something which can be proved from first to last.

When we come to first principles Faith must make its venture before "love can abound more and more in knowledge and in all discernment"—yet we Christians are every day recognising more and more as part of our religious Faith the progressive realisation of our sonship to God and of our brotherhood to one another, and therefore we also recognise a progressive morality. We cannot stand still. The history of the Christian Church is a perpetual witness of this struggle of a progressive moral idea with the stubbornness of human nature.

Alas! many to-day look to the Christ of the past, and oppose, in His name, the Christ of the present.

Yet I think it is true to say that the Church of God is, in this age, beginning to comprehend more fully some of the profound teachings of her Master.

Of one thing we can be sure—that people to day are more intelligent, more sincere, and more independent than they were; the most timorous person now is more daring in his private meditations than the boldest of a former generation. A modern writer has well said that the passion for truth is the most significant demand in modern life. “We have, for other phenomena, identical precedents in history, but this new determination, to take off, as it were, the blinkers and sit squarely and firmly face to face with truth—in the hope of finding her companionable—is indeed a new inspiration on the part of the human race.”

Now there are three ways in which it is possible to conceive that the truth of God may be attained by man.

The first is by an infallible oracle established as God’s mouthpiece on the earth.

The second is by the individual search of every single mind working absolutely by itself.

The third, the *Via Media*, wherein truth ever lies, is by each mind working conscientiously yet always using the experience of other minds, past and present, always working and living as part of a great whole, yet always finding the ultimate sanction of every truth in its own intelligent assent.

Of these three methods, Rome frankly accepts the first, and she clearly points out where the oracle is to which the truth-seeker must go to find infallibility.

The Reformation was the breaking up of this first idea ; yet even the sixteenth century was haunted by the spectre of Infallibility, and the general body of Protestants tried to find this Infallibility in their Bible, until criticism said to them, in tones which they could not mistake, "It is not there."

Then the Anglican Church began to make much of an infallible Church. All students of ecclesiastical history know well what tortuous sophistries, what reasoning in circles, this search after the seat of infallibility

involved. Universality, antiquity, consent—these were the watchwords. The Vincentian Canon, "*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,*" was to be the test; but there is no doctrine which will stand this test, for it is obvious that what is accepted by all cannot be denied by any.

Further, the increasing earnestness of the present age is forcing us to face the fact, that if the Anglican Church is an oracle at all, she is an oracle without a mouth, she has no tongue to utter the truth which all men are to accept as true.

Any one who is convinced that he has the whole of religious truth enclosed in a set of formulæ, and that all who differ from him are mistaken, becomes a sort of monomaniac. It has been well said that the community which tries to make itself the exclusive depository of truth only succeeds in cutting itself off from the real Catholic Church.

We are now slowly beginning to see that absolute identical belief is not essential to the identity of Christian faith and life.

The ideal unity of many men, of many minds, is gradually shaping itself into actual existence,

and the clearest lesson for our time is the need of tolerance and charity.

Now if we lay aside the notion of infallible authority, we have remaining a healthy individualism—the assertion of the personal life as the central object of the final purpose of the world.)

(And here it will be granted that individualism in matters of thought means “private judgment,” and this is a term of which we must not be afraid. It is the price one must pay for being a man. I question if there is any such thing as judgment which is not “private.” The man who chooses the authority to which he will submit must surely choose by private judgment, if his act is to have any reality or power. It was “private judgment” which took Dr. Newman to Rome.)

But there is a danger here, and it is the pitfall of “untrained” private judgment. It is sadly true that reckless individualism too often ends in unscrupulous libertinism and anti-social aims, which may be as bad as, or even worse than, the curse of infallibility; for we must remember that, in Christianity, the individual

does not stand alone—"we are every one members one of another."

And here is to be noted the difference between the second and third ways of attaining Truth, which have been noted.

For Truth is to be found not in the conclusions to which any single line of thought may lead, but in the totality of conclusions to which all lines have led, and are still leading the instructed Reason of man: to-day we have advanced far enough to see that amid all the varieties of religious opinion the goal of religious aspiration is one.

To use authority for evidence; to feel the power of beauty which belongs to ancient goodness; to distrust ourselves when we differ from the wisest and the best; to know that the whole Truth must come, not to one or two, but to the whole of humanity; and to listen long and patiently to that "whole" as it wrestles with its yet ungrasped, unmastered truth; to do all this, and yet to call no conviction our own, till our whole mind and conscience has accepted it as true; this is, I believe, the genuine relation of conscience to authority.

This is the great truth after which the theorists of Church authority are seeking.

Facts, of course, must be taken on authority—the story of the Gospels, the writings of the New Testament; these must be taken on the words of those who saw and heard them first; this is the witness of the Church and the testimony of History. But to prove and honestly examine the authenticity of the records, their freedom from mistake and prejudice, this is the work of educated “private judgment.”

To-day we all believe in the authority of experts; we all believe that the individual should accept as in some degree authoritative the results of the reasoning of the race.

And here I note that Historical Criticism, which has done so much to clear theology of accidental accretions, has also contributed very materially to its substance and strength. Agnostic despair of history is no longer possible.

The keenest criticism has failed to undermine the fact that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the fulfiller of the long prophetic hopes of Israel, and that the miracles which

He wrought can never be eliminated from the records of His life without destroying them; ~~yet~~ we know that our blessed Lord always based His teaching on the assent of the educated reason, never on mere authority. I say advisedly "educated reason," because nothing can be more contrary to the spirit of His teaching than the solution of such questions by what men call "common sense."

For the greater and the better part of our life is not regulated by what Aristotle calls τεκμήρια, "proofs positive," but by εἰκότα, "reasonable probabilities"; "probability," in fact, "is the guide of life."

"Nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou be wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to faith beyond the forms of faith."

As Christians, we are not compelled by any logical necessity to follow either the path which leads to a general negation of religious belief, or that which leads to unreasoning credulity; the Via Media is the safe and right way. I will not call it the way of compromise, because I do not hold that the due apportion-

ment of rights can properly receive that name—it is rather the giving of a true sense of proportion to all things, the “*ἐπιείκεια*” of the Apostle St. Paul, which, to quote again the words of Aristotle,¹ “is to pardon human failings; to look to the law giver, not to the law; to the spirit, not to the letter; to the intention, not to the action; to the whole, and not to the part.”

Logicians have often made merry at what has come to be called the English *Via Media*, because as a Church we appeal to a double principle—the authority of Scripture and the authority of primitive tradition. Yet surely it is just this reasonableness and breadth of view which is our glory—the fact that we do not deny nature because we believe in grace, nor refuse tradition because we accept the Scriptures.

What the world needs to-day is to feel the largeness of this Christian outlook, the strength of this Christian hope, and the reasonableness of the modern Christian's answer to life's problems, and our world would be infinitely better than it is, if but a tithe of the enthusiasm now

¹ Aristotle, *Rhet.* I. xiii.

expended on theology were devoted to the task of living a Christian life.

Men are so busy shouting their party shibboleths which Christ once and for ever condemned, that they have no time to do the real work which He entrusted to their hands.

Men are so anxious to be orthodox that they forget to be good.

We must remember that truth is many sided and no one has any monopoly of it, and that therefore it behoves us to be temperate, and to be courteous and loving to those who differ most radically from our standpoint, for they may be just as much right as we are.

Individual responsibility for our opinions we can never shake off, we should be unworthy of our manhood did we try to do so. But we are responsible for the way in which we arrive at those opinions. If in this age we are determined to begin with a negation, to live without Christ, without sacraments, without prayer, until we have mastered all the speculations for and against these verities, then our life will be thin and unsatisfactory.

The Christian religion is an existing fact.

It is a fact which for nineteen centuries has

proved on the whole most in accordance with other facts, and with the deepest feelings and highest aspirations of the noblest men and women of the foremost races in the march of civilisation.

It requires no train of reasoning or laboured reflection to convince us that it is better for ourselves and for others to act on the precepts of Christ rather than to obey the selfish promptings of our animal nature.

Physical life is too short to exhaust all the secrets of Divine Wisdom ; it were presumption to assume it were possible ; let us therefore begin with the accumulated experience of the past, and spend the future in honest endeavour to verify and enlarge it for ourselves. Then shall our Experience become the Witness, which the Church shall bear to future ages. For it is here that individual genius contributes an important element to the corporate reasoning of the world.

It is a natural law in the spiritual world that a higher gift is never offered until the lower gift has been appreciated.

*"Non scholae sed vitae discimus."*¹ It is no

¹ Seneca, Ep. 106 s. 11, 12.

mere polished formula, nor philosophic completeness of doctrine that will satisfy—for we seek to know One who will solve for us all the riddles of existence. And with life illuminated by that knowledge, we confess, with gladness, that it is in His light that we shall see light.

“Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove ;

We have but faith : we cannot know
For knowledge is of things we see ;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before.”

III

GOD'S EXISTENCE

“Lo! I have sought, he said, and striven
To find the truth, and found it not,
But yet to me it hath been given,

And unto you it hath been brought,
This Host of ours our Father is,
And we the children He begot.

Upon my brow I felt His kiss,
His love is all about our steps,
And He would lead us all to bliss;

For though He comes in many shapes
His love is throbbing in them all,
And from His love no soul escapes,
And from His mercy none can fall.”

W. C. SMITH.

“Therefore to whom turn I but Thee, the ineffable Name?
Builder and maker Thou of houses not made with hands!
What?—have fear of change from Thee who art ever the
same?

Doubt that Thy power can fill the heart that Thy power
expands?

There shall never be one lost Good! What was, shall
live as before;

The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
What was good, shall be good, with for evil so much good
more;

On the earth the broken arcs,—in the heaven a perfect
round!”

R. BROWNING.

III

GOD'S EXISTENCE

"In the beginning God."—GEN. i. 1.

"Canst thou, by searching, find out God?"—JOB xi. 7.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—JOHN iv. 24.

BELIEF in God is universal. It is necessary to explain our experience. If we think at all we must have an *a priori* conviction that events cannot happen without a cause.

We cannot understand the world of which we form a part except upon the assumption of a Universal Mind, for which, or in which, all that is exists.

The conviction of the idea of matter without mind is unintelligible.

Physically the world is a whole, all the facts of which are mutually interdependent. It is

impossible to explain it as the result of independent and hostile wills, for we can see order, plan, and design, and all this points to Mind—a single mind and a rational mind.

And to this extent we find all thinking men recognise God, whether they call Him the Absolute, the First Cause, the Unknowable, or the Eternal Energy. Darwin says, "The question whether there is a God or not is one which has been answered in the affirmative by the highest intellects who ever lived." He does not say it is the result that he had arrived at, but he takes his stand upon the general consciousness of the race, as it is mirrored in the "highest intellects who ever lived"; and he further adds "that with the more civilised races the conviction of the existence of an all-seeing Deity has had a potent influence on the advancement of morality." We may therefore assert that Belief in God is the great regenerating force of the world.

When, therefore, the question is put to us, "*Canst thou by searching find out God?*" we answer, It all depends upon the way in which we set about our search; always granting that in the nature of things a finite mind can

never do more than approximate to a knowledge of the Infinite.

Our knowledge of God depends upon culture. Every man is born capable of believing in God, but he is not born a believer in God; the knowledge, therefore, must develop in us as other knowledge develops.

The position asserted by our two greatest English divines, Hooker and Butler, that the human mind is incapable of grasping the Absolute, is now an accepted maxim of Christian philosophy, for, as Dr. Mansel said, the Absolute and the Infinite are names indicating, not an object of thought, but the mere absence of conditions of thought, and a negative cannot be affirmed to exist.

For example, we now know that, humanly speaking, a First Cause is quite unthinkable, for behind a Cause, however remote, the mind places another cause, and so on as long as ever it thinks at all.

Discussions about the Being, the Essence, or the Substance of God are, as it were, a mere playing with words; not only is it absolutely beyond the reach of human capacity to know what God is outside of human consciousness

and life, but if such knowledge were conceivable it would be useless.

Philosophically we have no more idea of God or of creation than newborn babes. We can only make guesses, and the greatest philosophers have come to this conclusion as the ultimate fact of their metaphysical reasonings. Descartes says, "By natural reason we can make many conjectures about the soul and have flattering hopes, but no assurance." Kant confesses that reason can never prove the existence of God, and St. Paul's conclusion is, "*O the depths of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, how inscrutable His ways!*" We can never know here on earth what God is outside human consciousness and human life, for the idea transcends reason.

Our knowledge of God, therefore, is a relative knowledge. We are God's provincialists in a narrow world, and our views are short. Maybe we are but parts of some scheme of infinite dimensions, infinite duration, and infinite development; if we could see the whole we should be able to grasp how all is harmonised by the Divine Energy, but being finite we cannot now grasp the infinite; but we can

appeal from God, and from what we know of Him in His minor personality to God in His unknown totality, and we believe that in the light of a vaster wisdom—

“All is well, tho’ faith and form
Be sundered in the night of fear.”

From a scientific point of view I think that Matthew Arnold has given us the best definition of God apart from Revelation. He says that “there is a stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being,” that is, there is a co-ordinating principle of life, an influence of some sort which causes everything to develop in a certain way. Man does not grow by chance ; man does not make his own law ; but there is a law in man, a law of his health, a law of his physical being ; and when disobeyed that law asserts itself in disease and confusion ; something, not himself, has impressed upon him a physical law. Science may call it a stream of tendency. We Christians call it God.

Further, historically, Arnold noted that there was a moral law as well as a physical law ; however far back he could go into antiquity, he

could never find a people wholly insensible to what is called right and wrong. Their views may not have been like ours, but we see that they were always tending in one direction. The world evidently has been impressed by a certain moral law of right and wrong which makes for the happiness of man, and yet man did not make this law, for he has been in notorious and constant rebellion against it in every age. Still it is as sharp-edged and self-avenging as any physical law; therefore we see an enduring power in the world which makes for righteousness, which also we must call God.

So scientifically, God is a stream of tendency, and God is a moral law.

But these cold, philosophic definitions will never give us religion. The worship of mere Power is the lowest form of worship possible—it is devil worship. Until we have assigned certain attributes to God beyond Power, worship is impossible for any morally developed man.

For all true religion must have for its basis a right conception of God. This is at once the centre and foundation. If the starting-point be

wrong, the problem of man's relation to his Maker will not be solved.

It has been said : " If man has a false idea of God, his love of God is the love of an untruth, and everything will be in some degree wrong with him." ¹

Now we are utterly unable to discern the true God objectively, until the subjective torch in our own souls has been lighted.

We must, therefore, begin our investigation not with the intellect but with the conscience—believing that both conscience and reason are given to each one of us as Divine lights, that they are trustworthy faculties by which man is apprehended of God and uplifted to a larger and fuller life.

Let us regard conscience as the something " not ourselves which makes for righteousness," or, as Wordsworth says—

" As God's most intimate Presence in the soul
And His most perfect Image in the world."

It is the common experience of men that the first perception of religious truth is not by the

¹ Cf. H. Wood, " God's Image in Man," a little book to which I am greatly indebted.

reason but by intuition. Man is born naturally religious. It was a shrewd instinct of the old Grammarians which led them to derive the Greek word for a man, "*ἄνθρωπος*," from an origin which means "the one who looks upward"; the instinct led them well; the upward yearning of the soul of man belongs to his very nature.

The first appeal, therefore, must be to the conscience, for the conscience in its highest manifestation is "God consciousness."

"Then, go not thou in search of Him,
But to thyself repair;
Wait thou within the silence dim,
And thou shalt find Him there."

We look within and we see a capacity in our own hearts for love and sacrifice and friendship, and we ask—How did these things get into our hearts? Where did they come from? Surely, they are more than the offspring of mere utility? Are they not the result of a sympathetic law, planted in our hearts, which enables us to triumph over ourselves and to live for others? Do they not lead us to rest in some great central source of love from whence our own being flows?

More and more we are led to recognise the unity of consciousness, for the true distinguishing feature of mind is that it is one and indivisible—it remains always the same, while its experiences vanish and change.

We know that the particles of our brains are constantly wasted by use, and yet, they are as constantly replaced by other particles, while the mind still remains.

Therefore, the discovery of thought, or of mind in nature, is not the creation of the thought or mind, but rather, as Kepler said, the thinking of God's thought after Him—the putting of ourselves into a position to adopt thoughts which are higher than our own. This view of God has been ably expressed by a modern scientist, the late Professor Seeley :—

“ I say that man believes in a God who feels himself in the presence of a Power which is not himself, and is immeasurably above himself, a Power in the contemplation of which he is absorbed, in the knowledge of which he finds safety and happiness.”

It is at this point that revelation comes to our aid.

"*God is Spirit*," says Jesus to the woman of Samaria ; this, in modern philosophy, means "God is a distinctly self-conscious being" ; and our worship must be worthy of our highest conception of His nature. It must be "*in spirit and in truth*."

God is Spirit, and His revealment to man must be made through the medium of Spirit. If He were possessed of a material form, the way of recognition would be through the senses, but Spirit can only be spiritually discerned. God cannot be seen in the Bible, He cannot be seen in Nature, except through the exercise of the spiritual vision. Our worship, therefore, must consist in the effort of the human spirit to identify itself with the Divine—not in a mystic, self-destroying unity, but in the direction of its aspirations and its will. We seek to bring our souls into a state of conformity with God's all-perfect will.

Further, our worship must be "*in truth*," that is, it must conform to our best intellectual conceptions about God and His will. This is of supreme importance. In our best moments we all feel dissatisfied and unhappy, until the tendency within us is brought into unison with

the tendency without us—until we ourselves also “make for righteousness” with our whole heart.

Our Lord Himself once drew a powerful contrast between the influence of a higher and of a lower estimate of God's character on the actions of men. He told His disciples that the time would come when “*Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service, and this shall they do,*” said He, “*because they know not the Father.*” That is, although they believed in God, they yet ignored the special revelation made by Jesus Christ of “the Fatherhood of God.” Ignorance of this Revelation has been the origin of some of the most terrible crimes against humanity that have ever disgraced the world. Hundreds of men and women have been roasted to death by order of Inquisitors, who, veiling their cruelty under the term *auto da fe*, witnessed that they did it in the name of what they believed to be God. On the throne of the universe they saw nothing but an angry and despotic Tyrant, who so hated heterodoxy, that He had prepared for all heretics a pandemonium of everlasting fire—and hence, quite honestly, as I believe, they

no
tale

sought to deter men by torture from such an
 L lawful fate.¹

Surely, here we can see that the revelation of Jesus Christ that "*God is Love*" supplies the only firm and substantial ground of our faith. Much that we cannot understand in the world is explained, when we learn to look upon God as our Father. It is natural that the child cannot fully grasp the mind and actions of his father, but enough for us to know that our Father is love.

"Space and time, O Lord, that show Thee
 Oft in power, veiling good,
 Are too vast for us to know Thee
 As our trembling spirits would ;
 But in Jesus, yes in Jesus,
 Father, Thou art understood.'

¹ Cf. Sir Oliver Lodge, *Hibbert Journal*, vol. 11, No. 3.
 "The connection between true theory and right action is real and close, although very likely the commonest faults of men are due less to wrong notions than to weak wills ; but the sins due to wrong theory are liable to be much more really deadly ; there is no wickedness so violent as that organised by the fanatic who thinks he is doing God service, nor is there any harm worse than can follow the footsteps of a well-meaning blatant fool. And the penalty is in a sense eternal, or at least æonic, for it is incurable except by mental and spiritual revo-

Although the conception of the Fatherhood of God is as old as the New Testament, and has been the possession of every one who has said the prayer "*Our Father*," yet I believe it is true to say that never until the present age have men properly realised it, never have they committed themselves to it so fearlessly, and so completely accepted all its logical sequences.

We are never nearer to God than when in silence of the understanding we simply feel our dependence on that Fatherly love which never faileth; and to obtain this trust and confidence, if it be not yours already, the co-operation of your will and the Holy Spirit is necessary. Then shall we understand that the link between the self-existent life that creates, and the life of dependence and weakness that is created is absolutely unbreakable.

For when we ask the question, Whence came man? the ultimate conclusions of science are agreed with the Bible answer to the problem.

lution. So long as wrong beliefs continue, so long there must be a sense of dislocation, a feeling of friction and of grit: the only remedy is to get right with the Universe."

The theory of spontaneous generation has long since been exploded, and inasmuch as thought must have been before matter, and as the unity of the Universal Thinker is a logical necessity, we are constrained to feel that it is no mere poetical rhapsody to exclaim—

“Oh, little child! thou bringest with thee still,
As Moses, parting from the fiery hill,
Some dim reflection in thine eyes,
Some sense of Godhead, some indefinite wonder
As of one drifted here unwillingly;
Who knows no speech of ours, and yet doth keep
Some dumb remembrance of a gracious home
Which lights his waking hours and fills his sleep
With precious visions which unbidden come;
Some golden link which nought of earth can sunder,
Some glimpse of a more glorious land and sea.”

When once you have made this faith yours, the world and its problems have a new aspect. As Archdeacon Wilberforce says, “You will be an optimist, though the tears may be streaming down your cheeks, for you will learn that God’s purpose is ‘the patience of immortal love outwearing mortal sin’; you will see that slowly and surely, better is ever being evolved out of worse, that even in the

midst of groaning and sorrow, love, joy, and peace are blooming."

Human love, we know, can lift men and women to heights which sometimes astonish us ; such human love makes us believe in the dignity and greatness of man. It shows us that we are more than we know ourselves to be ; yet God's love is the source and fountain of all love. It sums up for us the Perfection of God. And let us never lose sight of the truth that though God may be infinitely distant from the understanding, yet He may be intimately near to the heart.

Many a poor unlettered man or woman may have a knowledge of God deeper and truer than the greatest theologian. As Dr. Martineau writes,¹ "It is far from being the clear and acute intellect, but rather the pure and transparent heart that best discerns God."

Ask that poor woman, lying in her sick-room, how she comes to know God, and she will tell you. "Every day, for the last ten or twenty years, I have spoken to Him and He has answered me. I have taken my sorrows to Him and found relief. I have confessed my

¹ "Life of Martineau," i., p. 114.

sins to Him, and He has given me a sense of pardon." And if you further put the question, "How did you find God?" "I never found Him," she will answer; "it was God who found me; time was when I trusted to other supports, and one by one they all failed me, until in my misery I thought I would pray as I was taught as a child, and from that day I found a support, a strength such as I never had before. A new power came into my life, I felt the strength of the everlasting arms around me, and now I rest in peace."

What S. Augustine says is true: "We are made for God, and our hearts can find no peace till they rest in Him." We must individually make this experience ours, for here alone is to be found the final witness to God. So shall we have a tower of strength, which will support us not only in our own spiritual growth, but also in all our labours in the service of our fellow-men, support us through life, through death, and through eternity. For *"The Eternal God is our Refuge, and underneath are the Everlasting Arms."*

IV

GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

"A kind of mutual commutation there is, whereby those concrete names, GOD and MAN, when we speak of Christ, do take interchangeably one anothers' room, so that for truth of speech it skilleth not whether we say that the Son of God hath created the world, and the Son of Man by his death hath saved it; or else that the Son of Man did create, and the Son of God die to save the world."

"If, therefore, it be demanded what the person of the Son of God hath attained by assuming manhood, surely the whole sum of all is this: to be as we are, truly, really, and naturally man, by mean whereof he is made capable of meaner offices than otherwise his person could have admitted; the only gain he thereby purchased for himself was to be capable of loss and detriment for the good of others."

HOOKE, "Eccles. Polity," bk. v., ch. liii. 4 and liv. 4.

*God's child in Christ adopted—Christ my all—
What that earth boasts were not lost cheaply, rather
Than forfeit that blest name, by which I call
The Holy One, the Almighty God, my Father?
Father! in Christ we live, and Christ in Thee—
Eternal Thou; and everlasting We!
The heir of heaven, henceforth I fear not death;
In Christ I live! In Christ I draw the breath of the true
life!*

S. T. COLERIDGE.

IV

GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."—I JOHN iv. 9.

IT is a truth of the Bible that God is revealed everywhere and in all things; never has He left Himself without a witness.

We have in Nature a gradual disclosure of His power, as mind governing matter and evolving love; in humanity there is the universal revelation of conscience, the Divine law written in men's hearts; and yet further, in all ages there have been men who have perceived more clearly than their fellows some ray of God's truth, and who, proclaiming it, have been recognised by the world as revealers of light or lovers of truth.

This prophetic spirit we recognise in a Zoroaster, a Buddha, or a Socrates.

Among all the nations we see it at its highest in the Jews, to whom was given a pre-eminent consciousness of God. They had a supreme genius for righteousness. Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel stand out among the long list of demonstrators of God in different periods of their nation's history, until the light of this growing revelation given "*at sundry times and in divers manners*" came at last to its climax in Jesus Christ, *the Light of the World*, the Son of God incarnate, "the greatest surprise of human history."

And here let me say that in considering the life of Jesus, two opposite dangers are to be avoided.

There is a danger of forgetting its intense reality, of letting our faith in the Lord's Divinity overpower in our minds His perfect humanity. Thus men fall into a religion of mere imagination, and worship One whose life has become a vision.

The human life of Christ is the foundation of all our faith.

But there is also the danger of dwelling too exclusively on those few years of natural existence, of fixing our gaze too narrowly on the human example, forgetting that Christ is a Spiritual Master for all ages, if no longer with us, yet in us, guiding and teaching, until all men are drawn unto Him.

For while Christ reveals man, He also reveals God ; His character is God's character, in Him we see God, and this knowledge is given to us men through Christ's manhood.

Efforts have been made in the present day to represent the history of the life of Christ as little better than a cloud of legend. "The negation of the Supernatural," writes M. Renan, with the greatest confidence, "has become an absolute dogma for every cultivated mind." I might adduce similar expressions from Herbert Spencer, Matthew Arnold, Mr. Lecky, and other "cultivated minds," but I venture to affirm, with equal confidence, that there can be no living Christianity without a belief in the Supernatural ; to accept the position laid down by such critics involves a universal scepticism as regards all history.

Historically I find that the Supernatural is the life of every religion; the belief that in some way or other, apart from any known laws, minds are influenced, events are controlled, and a real communication, but partly understood on one side, is established by prayer and action, between the seen world and the unseen, lies at the root of all religion.

It seems to me very unprofitable to dogmatise about the Incarnation. To my mind nothing can be more narrow than to pretend to limit the ways, the modes, by which God shall enter His World, by which Spirit force shall impress itself upon matter, by which the ever-Immanent shall reveal itself to the finite. On this and such like questions, as Dr. Illingworth says, Christians can never merely ask, Is it likely to have happened? but, Is it likely to have happened, if Christ was God? Consequently, when we hear the Gospels rejected on account of the supernatural, it is obvious that the Divinity of Christ has been rejected first.

Our fundamental truth, therefore, is that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,

became perfect man to reveal to us the mind and character of God, to admit us, as it were, into the very bosom of the Infinite, to appease for us the hopeless terror of the Unknown, to give us the power to become Sons of God, possessors of all that is strong and beautiful in this world, heirs of all that is bright and glorious in the next. *"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."* The ideal of Jesus was the ideal of God.

Divine Son of God we believe He was, in a sense in which no other being ever was. For the true meaning of "only begotten," as Bishop Lightfoot has explained, is "the only one of its kind—the unique Son." Jesus reveals God to us in a way which no other has done or can do. His relation to God and His relation to humanity is solitary and unique, for in Him humanity attained its highest moral development. He stands before us in the Gospels as the meeting-point of Humanity and Divinity. Perfect man in all that makes up human nature, yet those

nearest to His presence were led to believe in His Godhead through their experience of His manhood, and coming so to believe they handed on their faith as an inheritance to the Christian Church.

He is perfect Human because He is Divine, and Divine because He is perfect Human.

It is because of His perfect humanity that the conscience of mankind has recognised in Him a supreme revelation of that God, who, all through the ages has been, by slow and successive stages, revealing Himself more fully to the human spirit.

All that could be expressed of God, His moral and affectional nature, His essential, eternally-begotten Human side, that we believe truly was expressed under human conditions in Jesus Christ, who grew and developed in wisdom and in knowledge and in favour both with God and man, and became our Divine Friend and Saviour.

Of all men, Christ was least the product of His age. He stands forth as the Universal Man, He transcended not only the limitations of His birth, but also those of His nation.

He had no Jewish characteristic or prejudice.

The Jew imagined that Jehovah was the God of his nation only. Jesus declared Him to be the Father of all men.

The Jew believed sacred places and prescribed ritual necessary to worship. Jesus said a right condition of spirit was all in all ; well might He say that He was "*one who beareth witness of Himself.*" For the universal brotherhood which He declared found its highest example, not in His sayings, but in His own spirit and conduct ; it was a new revelation of life.

Philosophers and reformers in all ages who have looked below the surface of life and politics, have always demanded a fresh start for humanity ; from Plato to Carlyle they are unanimous in this matter, and in Christ alone we have a new manhood ; born a true man, yet a new man. He alone can give us human nature without sin.

Our incarnate Lord, therefore, stands forth as the head and summary of that material creation through whose gradual developments He had all along been preparing for Him-

self a body; and He stands also as the Goal towards which all human progress tends, finding in Him its possibility, its meaning, and its end: the eternal ideal of man, abiding in the presence of God, and Himself expressive of God's humanity standing in the presence of man—one with man, one with God! "*The way, the truth, and the life.*"

"Thou art the Way!

All ways are thorny mazes without Thee;

Where hearts are pierced, and thoughts all aimless
stray,

In Thee the heart stands firm, the life moves free,

Thou art our Way!

Thou art the Truth!

Truth for the mind, grand, glorious, infinite,

A heaven still boundless o'er its highest growth;

Bread for the heart its daily need to meet,

Thou art the Truth!

Thou art the Life!

All paths without Thee paths that end in death;

All life without Thee with death's harvest rife;

All truth's dry bones, disjoined, and void of breath,

Thou art our Life!"

So we claim that Christianity, the religion of Jesus, is the one final religion. It supersedes

all other religions, not by excluding but by including all the elements of truth which each contained.

There was light in Zoroastrianism, light in Buddhism, light among the Greeks; but it is all included in Christianity, for in Christ "*all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid*," and in Him there is a continually developing possibility of clearer knowledge of God.

And as each race has found Him, so each has brought out more of His manifold power and meaning. We can place our finger upon definite points in history, and show how the religion of Christ has jewelled the Ages with Divine benefactions.

It spread in the Roman Empire, restoring purity of manners, and teaching a new law to warriors; it sanctified the life of the Middle Ages, taming the rough heathen into gentleness; it gave impulse to the movements of the Reformation, teaching men the true meaning of their manhood; it still inspires our philanthropy; it still dominates our civilisation; the cross on the dome of S. Paul's Cathedral—the central monument of the most powerful city in

the world—still bears witness to the triumph of the Divine Galilean, "*Whose kingdom shall have no end.*"

But what our incarnate Lord is to the universe considered as a whole, and to humanity in the mass, He is also to the individual.

It is really of no consequence to us to know that God dwells in matter and moves in thought, moulding the purposes of men to his own ends, unless He is in some relation to these "personalities" which claim to be ends in themselves; for we must remember that personality is the highest mode of existence known to our experience; the material of our bodies, the thoughts of our minds, drift through us like a stream, but the personality, the Ego, remains, from the cradle to the grave, self-conscious, self-identical, and independent.

It is here, then, that we have the great significance of the Incarnation, for it was a revelation that God was not merely an impersonal drift of tendency, but a Person, and as such One in whom all human persons were destined to find complete satisfaction. Christ does not give us mere information about God,

but being Himself God He reveals God. "*In Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily,*" in Christ we have revealed the Fatherhood of God, and He has taught us that God is love.

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:

Thou madest man, he knows not why;

He thinks he was not made to die;

And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,

The highest, holiest manhood, thou:

Our wills are ours, we know not how;

Our wills are ours, to make them thine."

Yes, Tennyson was right: "*Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.*"

The picturesque old simile given by Paulinus in the hall of Eadwine at York, of a bird flying in from the night, we know not whence, and out in the night again, we know not whither, is as true of human life to-day as when it was first urged as an argument for listening to the Christian gospel.

With all our knowledge, with all our science, we know nothing, except from revelation, of the

ultimate origin or final destiny of man. And as Dr. Rashdall has pointed out, "what we believe about Christ is only important in so far as it helps us to think about God and to feel towards God as He felt. And what we think about God is of importance only as it helps us to reproduce in our words and in our lives that ideal of humanity which was set forth through Christ."

Our commission as Christians is, therefore, to make men believe in God manifested in the flesh, and by our lives to show them that God, our Maker and Upholder, has been with us; that He has trodden this earth, has spoken human words, has suffered human pains, leaving us an example that we can imitate.

God, the Eternal, has been on earth in certain years of time, and men have looked upon His face and found it was the face of one who called them friends.

Surely nothing that can be said of man's capacities or progress or rights can in any way approach even distantly to that which is involved in God's having "*so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,*

that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

So truly was man made in God's image that God could live a human life without ceasing to be God.

I look into the Gospels, and I see there brief portraitures of Him which show me how quickly responsive human nature was to His influence; multitudes follow Him into the wilderness, they wait for Him on the lake-side, they climb the trees to see Him. At His approach the dull eyes of death are brightened, the palsied hand grows steady. Poor outcasts wash His feet and wipe them with the hairs of their head.

Thus I see Him drawing all men to Himself, because they knew that He loved them—loved those whom nobody else loved, cared for those who had none to care for them; and when the time came, when there was nothing more to be done, having loved them to the end, He laid down His life for them.

This is the Jesus Christ whom we must learn and know.

From the highest heaven there comes down

upon the human heart the message of God's tender humanity.

In the highest heaven there is a heart, "the highest human that we know," which throbs in sympathy with human need.

"So, the All Great, were the All Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice,
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!'
Face, My hands fashioned, see it in Myself!
Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of Mine,
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
And thou must love Me who died for thee!"

This is the message which Christ bore to earth; it is the message which still incarnates itself in all those who are filled with His Spirit. Nay, it has so entered into the mind of man that he cannot escape from it.

And when men stand up in all the serene and conscious wisdom of this century to ask, "Are we still Christians?" they answer themselves, for they stand in borrowed plumes, arrayed in ideas which are Christ's; arguing as if the question were possible! Yet, in doing this, they witness that the vision of Christ has so passed into the thought and

spirit of the world that the world can never more escape Him.

It is our unique mission as Christians to bring men into personal relation with our Lord; unless we preach Christ by our lives we cannot make men Christians, for service is the active manifestation of the indwelling Christ.

From age to age God has never left Himself without witnesses, and from age to age the most mighty apology for Christianity has been in the lives of her saints. "*We are His witnesses*"; it may not be ours to utter convincing arguments, but it can be ours to live holy lives.

"It was reserved for Christianity," writes Mr. Lecky in his "History of European Morals," "to present to the world an ideal character, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries . . . has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, and temperaments . . . the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists. . . . Christianity conquered because

it formed more upright men than any other creed."

And to-day, as of old, deeds, not words, are the only coins that ring true. Show me a man who, with heart and soul, desires truly to follow Christ, and I will show you, in face of all the scepticism of the modern age, a living witness to the truth of Christ.

Let us, therefore, strive to imitate The Life revealed to us in the Gospels: let us take It with us into the bustle and glare of the busy world, amid the struggles and temptations of everyday life.

"Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be
born,
If He's not born in thee, thy soul is all forlorn."

Then, individually, we shall find that as we yield up our personal life of ease and comfort in Christ's service, a larger, fuller life will flow into us, our souls will be expanded, the life of Christ will be manifested in us, and we shall become sons of God—saviours of our fellow-men; "*for as He was, so are we in this present world.*"

The Divine Humanity in man is a token

to all men of the Divine Humanity in God,
for—

“He sees the gleams
Of better thoughts across the murkiest gloom,
The seeds of good amid the howling wastes,
And perfects them at last ; and in the depths
Of His Divine forbearance, suffereth long,
And passeth by transgression. That vast throng,
The multitude of peoples, nations, tongues,
Shall stand before His Throne, and every act
Of human kindness He will own as His,
And crown, as service rendered unto Him.”

V

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

"It is with Man's Soul as it was with Nature: the beginning of Creation is—Light. Till the eyes have vision, the whole members are in bonds. Divine moment! When over the tempest-tost Soul, as once over the wild-weltering Chaos, it is spoken: 'LET THERE BE LIGHT!'"—CARLYLE.

"We grope after the Spiritual by describing it as invisible. The true meaning of Spiritual is REAL."—EMERSON.

*"God is never so far off as even to be near:
He is within! Our Spirit is the home He holds most
dear.
To think of Him as by our side, is almost as untrue,
As to remove the throne beyond those skies of starry
blue.
So all the while I thought myself homeless, forlorn, and
weary;
Missing my joy, I walked the earth—myself God's
Sanctuary!"*

FABER.

V

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

"The Spirit of truth . . . he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you."—JOHN xvi. 13. 14

THE work, the inspiration, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, this beyond all question is the consummate doctrine of Christianity; it is the keystone of that mighty arch of revelation which spans the universe of God.

For the Holy Spirit is the universal life, the "I am" in whatever is, the essential vitality, creating all, pervading all, and sustaining all.

Last in the eternal order of the Divine Being, "proceeding from the Father and the Son," the Holy Spirit is the first point of

contact with God in the order of human experience, for it is His office to reveal Jesus Christ to the world, through Whom we have the inmost character of God Himself manifested.

This is what, in theological language, is called the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. It is a convenient, though sadly misunderstood formula, under which we sum up our knowledge of God as revealed or manifested to humanity. The terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are but different names for the one God; they are, as it were, three different representations and experiences to our minds of the one God.

The idea that the three Persons are actual separate existences in the Divine Being belongs to the obsolete philosophy of realism.

God is one God, but to human view there is a threefold Deific demonstration.

It is not God, composed of three distinct persons, but a triple manifestation of God to human consciousness that constitutes the Trinity.

To our rudimentary spiritual vision the incomprehensible ONE is resolved. Our eyes

would be blinded by the full effulgence of the white light of One Spirit and Life, and so it comes to us softened, divided, and expressed.

Now God is three Persons in the sense that as He is manifested to our consciences He assumes three different characters, or appears under three different aspects, for He has revealed His nature to us in a certain progressive order of thought.

First, He is revealed as Father, Eternal Creator, Fount, and Origin; secondly, in human life as Son, Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, the Revealer of the Father; and thirdly, as Holy Spirit, the perpetual atmosphere of the Eternal God as manifested in Jesus Christ, permeating the spirit of man, and exerting a continuous influence upon his higher nature as the Enlightener, the Strengthenener, the Comforter; and it is only when we have named together the three that we have named God with all that the names enshrine to our human consciousness.

God, humanly speaking, was revealed perfectly and fully in Jesus Christ, and, in a sense, this revelation was final; that is, it contained in itself all the germs of future development;

but it required to be brought home to the minds and consciences of men—it needed to be applied to the changing needs of each successive age.

So when we say we believe in the Holy Spirit, we imply that we believe that God in Jesus is still revealing Himself, that He is still making Himself known in the great movements of action and thought, of history and of literature, as well as in the secret depths of individual souls.

This is the doctrine of the Trinity, as understood by our most eminent modern scholars.

At best it is but an expressed apology for the imperfection of human language in speaking of the things of God, for the most correct theology can be no more than an approximation to truth ; but it is important at the present day, because it brings before us the two great aspects of the Divine Self-revelation. For it is of almost equal importance that we should appreciate and appropriate all that God spoke to the world by His Son ; and that we should not close our ears to what His Holy Spirit is saying to our own age ; indeed, it is impossible to understand what the revelation of God

in Christ really means to us, except in the light of the continuous revelation of the Spirit.

Alas! that His work has been so often ignored by a contemptuous dogmatism which has prided itself on having exhausted the inexhaustible by its formulæ, or by an antiquarianism which is ever delving in the past and has no ear for the living voice of the Spirit in our own day!

Our blessed Lord told His disciples that it was expedient that He should go away from them, that He should leave the world and return to the Father.

Scientists, men like Sir W. Hamilton, James Hinton, and Dr. Schofield, have suggested how possible it may be for us to be surrounded by another world, a sphere of some higher dimension than the known dimensions of length, breadth, and height, and yet a place with which we are linked by the spiritual part of our being; and I believe that it was into this unseen sphere of being that the Saviour withdrew Himself at what is called the Ascension.

There—not away from us, but nearer our

inmost life; not now enclosed in the limitations of a human body, but filling universal life, is the Saviour of the world, and thence through the Eternal Spirit, which is the out-flowing life of Father and Son, is He drawing all men unto Him.

“Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”

It is this which makes it so plain how Christ's example is of use to us. People often argue that if Christ was sinless, His example can be of no use to us. I grant this if He was only our example; but, in fact, His example and His At-one-ing sacrifice are only parts of His work; He who acts for us, as our representative, also acts in us as our new life. “It is Christ in us,” as Bishop Gore says, “who forms us by His spirit inwardly upon the model which He showed us outwardly.”

And so to-day, however weak we may be, we have Christ's Holy Spirit in us, ever ready to strengthen us. Therefore let us never despair, for with God “there is no failure

except in ceasing to try." Only when we persistently resist and ignore the awakened "God germ" striving within us, only when we deliberately become empty of the Spirit that we may be full of self—only then may we despair.

Let it be enough for us now to feel that we are ensphered by God, and that the criterion of spiritual progress is loving co-operation with the Divine Spirit, Who is ever seeking to guide us into all truth. Our attitude, then, as Christians, should be that of assimilation ; for the link between God and man, as revealed by nature and by Jesus Christ, is that mind is everywhere homogeneous.

"From God derived, to God by Nature joined,
We act the dictates of His mighty mind ;
Though priests are mute and temples still,
God never wants a voice to speak His will."

In spite of the materialism of our day, it has been affirmed that consciousness, or feeling, is the only certain thing in this world. We are told that mind or spirit alone exists, and that instead of mind being a form of matter, matter is but a form of mind. Indeed,

the more one thinks of it, the harder it becomes to give a real definition of matter. That which we see is but the effect upon our senses of the movement of electrons, or, as Mr. J. S. Mill expressed it, "a permanent possibility of sensation," and even of this effect upon our senses we may be deceived, for inter-molecular movement ceases at the absolute zero of temperature. But about mind, about emotion and thought, we are never deceived; as a fact of experience nothing but mind is of the slightest consequence; the Inner, which certainly *is*, rules absolutely the Outer, such as it is.

Fame, success, the most exquisite surroundings, are as nothing if we are distracted with pain or sorrow; an excruciating toothache is sufficient to make one appreciate this truth.

Further, just as it is the nature of matter to seek matter, and like to seek like—so mind seeks mind; to quote the late Mr. Haweis, "Just as the material sun reflects himself in ten million dewdrops, so does the great Over-soul of God-mind in the universe, mirror Himself in the countless million under-souls of men."

Those unbidden thoughts that unexpectedly flash into our souls, those nobler instincts which shrink from what is base and fill us with remorse when we fall: what are they? Surely they are more than mere protoplasmic changes of ganglion nerve cells, producing carbonic acid gas and water, as the Materialists would tell us. Nay, they are the strivings, the activities of the Lord, the Life-giver!

And our happiness, our safety, the formation of our characters, all depend on our receptiveness to this Divine influence for *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*; and to make these things our own implies deliberate self-adjustment to the attracting force; deliberate opening of the inmost sanctuary of being to the highest and noblest influence; and yet we can none of us help being "*filled with the Spirit*" if we do not in some way generate an atmosphere of resistance.

To each generation the promise of the text is fulfilled, "*He will guide you into all truth.*" Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church of Christ is enabled to enter more

completely into the meaning of the message she is commissioned to proclaim.

Each generation must re-state and re-interpret the revelation it has received in terms to meet its own needs. Nothing short of this can give us courage to investigate truth ; no other conception of Christianity is so profoundly Christian, for it emphasises our absolute trust in Him who is the truth, and our abiding belief in the work of His Holy Spirit.

"Wheresoever the Church is," says Irenæus, "there is the Spirit of the Lord ; wheresoever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the Church." Far be it from any one of us to narrow the Pentecostal gifts ; wherever there is goodness, purity, and faith there is the Spirit of the Lord. No man has the whole truth ; no Church adequately presents the whole truth ; but all who are under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth are being led into truth.

Let us, therefore, gladly recognise all that is good and true, wherever it is to be found, and claim it as belonging of right to Christ.

Let us pray that the guiding of a Father's counsel may be with us in all our struggles and difficulties—intellectual as well as practical—

being fully persuaded that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things, not all at once, not maybe in our time, nor in that of our children, but in that day when we shall have attained to perfect manhood, even "*to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*"

All down through the ages God's quickening voice may be heard, in the beautiful things that have been disclosed by literature and by art, in the wonderful things which have been brought to light by physical and philosophic research; at every turn, at every point, we meet the living God.

"Thy truth, O most mighty Lord, is around us on every side. It is Thy Spirit which has been building up our manifold civilisation, developing and multiplying our industries, increasing our knowledge, and quickening our activities."

Therefore, while giving God the thanks, let us "*stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*"

We need not fear that we are the victims of the prejudices of our own day, or the slaves of the Time-Spirit; "*Because we are Sons, God*

92 *The Old Theology in the New Age*
hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our
hearts," therefore, together let us pray—

“Breathe on us, breath of God,
Fill us with life anew,
That we may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.

Breathe on us, breath of God,
Until our hearts are pure,
Until with Thee we will one will
To do or to endure.

Breathe on us, breath of God,
Till we are wholly Thine,
Till all this earthly part of us
Glows with Thy fire Divine.”

VI

THE CHURCH

"There is no communion possible among men who believe only in hearsay. Only in a world of sincere men is Unity possible—and there, in the long run, it is as good as certain."

CARLYLE.

*'All who speak Truth to me commissioned are ;
All who love God are in my Church embraced.
Not that I have no sense of preference—
None deeper!—but I rather love to draw,
Even here, on earth, on toward the future law
And Heaven's fine etiquette, where 'Who?' and 'Whence?'
May not be asked ; and at the Wedding Feast,
North shall sit down with South, and West with East !'*

BURBIDGE.

"Are not all true men that live, or that ever lived, soldiers of the same army, enlisted under Heaven's captaincy, to do battle against the same enemy, the empire of Darkness and Wrong? Why should we misknow one another, fight not against the enemy but against ourselves, from mere difference of uniform?"—CARLYLE.

VI

THE CHURCH

"When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."—
EPH. iv. 8-13.

AT no other time in the world's history was there more needed a clear and true conception of what we mean when we talk about the Church than there is to-day.

In these critical days every theory must submit itself to the test of facts. Therefore I do not propose to inquire what definition of the Church satisfied either the fourth or the sixteenth century, but rather how we are to define the Church to-day.

The real sign of the supremacy of the Christian Society is that it embraces the whole truth, and the Catholicity of the Church should be the symbol of its comprehensiveness.

"I believe in one Holy Catholic Church"—this is the ideal;—"in the visible Church the evil is ever mingled with the good"—this is the actual. The statement of our Creed keeps before us the perfect heavenly ideal.

The Holy Catholic Church exists as an ideal, which we must ever keep before us, which we must strive after, and by which we must test and correct all our theories and all our schemes of reform, for our's would be a poor religion if the theory was not higher than the fact.

First, then, as followers of Christ, we believe that the Church in all nations is one. One in heavenly ideal rather than in actual and visible life.

There never was an epoch since the Church spread beyond Jerusalem when the "*one body of Christ*" was one in visible uniformity or even one in perfect sympathy. At no period was there ever one outward and visible society gathered together in one formulary, for it is

common experience that different minds will ever see different parts of truth.

The late Bishop Westcott has pointed out that "it is possible to trace even in the Apostolic age the essential features of most of those divisions over which we grieve."

Hooker says, "The unity of the Church consisteth in that uniformity which all several persons thereunto belonging have, by reason of that *one Lord*, whose servants they all profess themselves, that *one Faith* which they all acknowledge, that *one Baptism*, wherewith they are all initiated."

We must therefore seek for a unity of *one flock* folded in many pastures, yet watered at one fountain-head, washed in the same cleansing stream, following the one good Shepherd—the Saviour of the world.

If we go back to the earliest and fundamental charter of the Church "*Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them*," we shall learn that Christian fellowship does not depend primarily on forms of government, but on union with Christ and fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

And the object of the Church is that Jesus

Christ may be revealed to man. According to S. Paul it is to be an incarnation of God in Society, just as Jesus Christ was the incarnation of God in man; and this union of man with God, this incarnation of God in humanity is represented in the Ephesian Epistle by the figure of a colossal man with many members, but one life and one spirit.

We English Churchmen claim to be one member of this colossal man, one household in the great family of God; one fold amid the mighty flock.

Our position is very broadly defined in the XIXth Article of Religion, which runs thus: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

We are further agreed that a continuous ministry and some discipline are essential to every branch of Christ's Church, yet uniformity in this matter is not necessary; therefore, no prescribed form of ministerial polity or of discipline is included in our Article's definition of the Church.

The constitution and authority of the Church resides essentially in "the congregation of faithful men" and in opposition to all Romish claims; it is not dependent on the existence of the priest-man. But, while our Church jealously maintains this independence of particular Churches in respect of polity, she clearly asserts her own belief that the threefold orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons are of Apostolic origin and authority.

As a Church, I need hardly say, we lay no claim to infallibility, and we deny that any particular Church ever possessed it. We do, indeed, maintain that we have power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of the Faith. Yet this is a restricted authority, for even creeds derive their authority from the canonical literature of the Old and New Testament. The final court of appeal of the Catholic Church is to the Catholic Bible; the Church may not ordain anything "contrary to God's Word written." In other words, the Church of England has made it a fundamental article that nothing shall be proclaimed as being a real part of the Christian faith for which a claim cannot be made on

the consciences of man and which cannot be strictly proved.

The Church of England sends us to the Bible as the most classical expression of saving truth, and she asks us to accept it as interpreted by the best thought and learning of our time.

From these brief considerations I think we shall understand that the ideal of the Church is not the picture of a splendid and all-powerful priesthood and a docile and reverent people—not a division of mankind into priests and people, but a unity where the priest is merged in the people—a universal priesthood.

This is a fundamental conception of the Church, and if we can grasp it firmly we shall have a key that will unlock much in the history of the Jewish Church and in the rise and development of the Christian Church.

It explains the incessant conflict between the priest and the prophet in the Jewish Church: the conflict between the ideal voice of the prophet, with its all-embracing dream of an equality of privilege and universal approach to God; and the narrow, temporary system of the priesthood—a system necessary for

the hardness and stupidity of men's hearts—yet a system whose object was achieved when it had brought men to Christ.

Historically, we find that the Hebrew priesthood was most supine and impotent at those precise periods when the people most needed reform. It was never the priests who attempted to reform the morals of the land, but always the prophets, and the bitterest opposition to their work ever came from the priesthood.

When priests were most in power, the people were deepest in corruption and error. Nay, when the Son of God Himself came to redeem mankind, the priests—not the world nor the State—hounded Him to death.

Still, to-day, as in all the past centuries, the two tendencies conflict. Much of the unrest and anxiety of the present time is owing to the tendency in some quarters to magnify the clerical office, and to accentuate and widen the differences between clergy and laity.

The grandest political action of the Reformation was that it replaced the clergy in the position of citizens, that it made the highest moral interests of clergy and laity identical.

I believe that no Christian clergyman can

claim more than a call to teach and to administer certain functions as a delegate of the people; he is not the channel, nor the mediator of Divine grace, but only the voice that proclaims it; hence the arrogance of sacerdotal claims is absolutely unwarranted.

When we turn to the Bible, the Christian's final court of appeal, we find that no despotic power is vested either in individuals or community; the so-called "gift of the keys" does not permit bishop or priest to exclude in an arbitrary way from the kingdom of heaven. The power to bind or loose belongs to the whole Church, and the words refer to things or acts, prohibiting or else permitting them; in plain English, they but conferred on the Church the power of making her own by-laws.

The authority, therefore, claimed for the Church is constitutional and not despotic. Infallibility, as I have said before, is neither claimed nor assumed, but the Church is to be conceived of as a living thing—the *body of Christ*, His living members, and it is here, as in everything else, that one must look for the survival of the fittest. The Church, like

any other organism, must adapt itself to its environment.

Human society is constantly changing in its needs and experiences, and unless the Church changes to correspond she will be locally destroyed, for in all organisms want of adaptation is death.

Turning to our present-day controversies, I must confess, with sorrow, that I see but little desire on the part of our clergy for that reformation and progress which is absolutely essential to the Church's life.

To believe, or think they believe, exactly what Augustine, or Calvin, or Luther believed; to go back intellectually to some bygone age and to stop there: this, I regret to say, is for hundreds of both clergy and laity the "*Summum bonum*."

Let us understand clearly that the sacerdotal position is at once unscriptural, mischievous, and reactionary.

It is unscriptural, for the Epistle to the Hebrews deliberately declares that the old system had passed away, and that all priestly symbols were fulfilled and ended in Christ.

It is mischievous, for it has in all ages been

the most prolific breeder of scepticism; brave minds revolt from the tyranny and oppression of priestcraft.

It is reactionary, because it seeks to put back the clock of Time; it reverses historic evolution in religion; it is a return to religious kindergarten, suited only to an age of spiritual infancy.

The Church is to us the great instrument of Christ's religion. But that religion is never precisely the same in all respects in any two ages. The Holy Spirit is still guiding us into the whole truth, and we cannot be untrue to His guidance.

As I have already pointed out, the Past is for instruction and warning, not for imitation, and it is just because of this that we cannot allow the past to be stereotyped, that we cannot say that what was known in 1559 is an adequate measure of what we know to-day.

Knowledge and action are correlatives. To crush action is to wither knowledge.

The Churchman, with his hopes in the future, cannot allow his Church to be tied and bound by the past. Old ceremonies—or old lack of ceremonies if you prefer it—old guesses at

truth and interpretations of doctrine must give way to fuller and deeper knowledge.

If the Establishment can help us to a freer life and healthier progress, well and good. If not, the alternative must be faced. It is just because we do not want Disestablishment that the reactionary policy of the late Lambeth ruling is to be regretted; for it has shown us that the real danger of the present age is a worship of Legalism—living issues are to be interpreted by dead formulæ. For incense we have no care one way or the other, but for the due religious freedom of the present, and for power to work out a better future, all earnest men have a great and growing regard. We would have the Church broader and more comprehensive, and our rulers have been forced to make it narrower and more pedantic.

If there is one thing certain about the much-disputed Reformation Settlement, to my mind it is this: that it was the intention of the framers of our formularies to make it possible for the strongest of Catholics who yet could not acknowledge the Papacy, and the keenest of Protestants who yet shrank from Geneva, to

meet together in one Church; and it is the glory, rather than the shame, of the Anglican Communion that she alone among the Churches of Christendom is able to keep High Churchmen and Low Churchmen hospitably within her borders.

Why should the home of the Reformation be the country where the law of tolerance and charity is least observed?

The more one studies Christ's words, the more convinced one becomes that He declared growth and progress in the truth to be an essential element in the life of His Church.

And I would point out that when the Bible speaks of truth it does not mean "orthodoxy" as so many Churchmen imply when they use the word; it means verified facts.

We have only to turn to the pages of history as recorded by Milman, or Mosheim, or other Church historians to see that Christian veracity in the past has not been what it ought to have been. When Dr. Temple, our late Archbishop, defended himself for his share in "Essays and Reviews," he wrote to Dr. Tait, "I, for one, joined in writing the book in the hope of breaking through that mischievous

reticence which, go where I would, I perpetually found destroying the truthfulness of religion."

God forbid that we to-day should be afraid of the truth. It would be an evil day for us as a nation, should we ever be tempted to go back to the materialistic doctrines and superstitions of the fifteenth century. If our Anglican Christianity identify herself with priestcraft, or the confessional, or any other of the corruptions of Rome, then as such it may perish as it has perished before. Look back over many a blood-stained page of history, and you will see why men have come to hate a Christianity which was so vilely misrepresented by those who arrogated to themselves the exclusive title of Catholic.

Now while we have every cause to be proud of our title of a true branch of the great Universal Church, we are, or should be, equally proud of the fact that we are a Reformed and Protestant Church, titles for which our forefathers dared to suffer and to die; titles which have laid the foundation of our greatness as a nation, and won for us the freedom of the truth. It has been truly said that "Antioch

and Spires must ever be sacred places for those who care for the highest welfare of the race. From each we get a name which marks a vital distinction, each bears witness to a new truth and a new hope for mankind. From Antioch we get the name Christian ; from Spires we get the name Protestant."

But a warning is here needed by our Evangelical friends who claim this latter title with so much satisfaction : the *principles* of the Reformation are not to be tied down to the *doctrines* of the Reformation.¹

Surely it is too late in the day to be putting bounds upon that truth which in Christ is essentially boundless. Christianity is not to be identified in any way with what is said either by the old Fathers or the modern religious newspapers. It is what Christ said and taught, aye, and is now teaching. The worst of heresies is to forget that Christ is a living Christ, whose Spirit is ever active and present among men.

¹ Our Reforming fathers were so anxious to avoid the use of words whose real significance might be mistaken, that they never once introduced the word Protestant into our Liturgy, our Articles, or Homilies.

As a National Church, Christ has set us free—free from the terrors of the Inquisition and the Star Chamber, free from the slavery of mental subserviency, free from superstition and ignorance. Are we to be led back into bondage because we are too weak and sentimental to think for ourselves? The need of the day is for men strong enough and brave enough to proclaim that our Anglican Reformed religion is the assertion of a principle of religious belief, no less positive than that of Rome.

In opposition to Romanism it asserts the indwelling of God in the world and in human life; reason and conscience it asserts to be a Divine light in every man, faculties by which normal relations are established with God, and by which God uplifts man to higher, fuller, and more abundant life.

Further, the actual facts of experience compel us to enlarge our view of the true Church beyond the limitations of the Roman theory. It is evident to every one that no single ecclesiastical organisation has a monopoly of the Holy Spirit; no one has an exclusive possession of the life of Christ.

The fundamental position assumed by our

Church at the Reformation was that the supreme expression of religious truth is to be found in a Literature, and not in a Dogma, and this undoubtedly is the true position. "The Church is the interpreter of Scripture," but not the Church of any one age, nor the Church speaking in a General Council, nor the Pope as the infallible Vicar of Christ; the voice of the Church is like the British Constitution, not a written document, not reduced to formulæ, but gathered, painfully and with difficulty, from the thought and experience of successive generations of men. And, therefore, to endeavour to precipitate once for all the thought and belief of the Church into an unchangeable formula which shall, for all time, be the expression of the Catholic faith, is nothing less than unbelief in the power of the Eternal Spirit.

It is very clear that the form of Church government was a matter which Christ left open, to be determined by His followers in all ages; this is the position clearly laid down by Hooker in his work on Ecclesiastical Polity, as the sufficient answer to either Romanist or any other Nonconformist.

Let us, therefore, with Hooker, understand

that all Church organisation exists for one supreme end—to establish the reign of Christ in the hearts of men. It exists to do the work of Christ on earth, to build up the Christian character, and to advance the kingdom of God; and as a Church we are to be judged by the success with which we accomplish this purpose. Surely under the complex conditions of modern life, every form of Church organisation may find its work and be welcomed.

For the unity which Christ seeks is no unity of outward form, but unity of Spirit.

The ideal of ecclesiastical unity has been tried, and it failed. To-day it would be the greatest curse and hindrance to the moral and intellectual progress of mankind. Far be it from us Englishmen to see our Church the only one universal type; let us recognise the Apostolic dictum that there are "*diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; differences of administration, but the same Lord; diversities of operation, but the same God.*"

Just as in Nature under the influence of forces identically the same there is a constantly progressive evolution of higher forms of life, so in religion under the influence of the one Spirit

there is a continual development of more accurate opinions and more excellent practices. Our ancestors tried like free men to make advances upon their ancestors. Alas for the heritage they have bequeathed us, if we have been transformed thereby into grovelling slaves who are fearful of speaking the truth that has been revealed to us!

The great aim of all religious reformers in the past was to bring the belief of their age into harmony with its faith, to get a correspondence between religious doctrine and religious life; they had to give new readings to truth to bring it into accord with the advanced religious sentiment of their age. What has been done in the past can be done again. And when the time arrives, as assuredly it will come, sooner or later, when our National Church will have to revise her formularies and re-state her doctrines, we must not be numbered amongst those who in every age have insolently trampled on all that is new, and who have tried to silence what they cannot understand.

When I consider the ignorance and bigotry of past ages towards those who have come from God, blessing and to bless, my heart fails me,

for I perceive that this age, like every other, is trying to stamp out the new forms of faith and of knowledge, trying to silence the men who are rising up to show the wonderful ways of God.

Although, as has been well said, there is at once the shadow of Calvary whenever any great soul utters new truth; yet God is not mocked; torpor and stupidity bring their own punishment; those who will not reform sicken and die, and their place knows them no more.

While "*they that wait on the Lord,*" patiently abiding His time and His method, "*they shall renew their strength.*" Theologies may be barren and Churches retrogressive, but Christ lives; man falls, but God rules, and He is not confined in orthodox formulæ, nor unattainable except through human priests and material symbols.

The truer scientific habit of mind, which is developing to-day, almost unconsciously, in each one of us, is fatal to all superstition and credulity; it is loyal neither to authority nor to opinions, however venerable they may be; but to truth and to facts it has sworn allegiance. Christ is the Truth. If our Church be but

true to Him she has nothing to fear either in the present or in the future, except her own narrowness, her own superstitions and idolatries; for in the long run, the interests of truth and religion must be identical.

The late Bishop Fraser, of Manchester, once said: "That religious communion will most commend itself to Englishmen which displays the greatest efficiency in winning souls to Christ; which proves, by a long, firm grasp of its spiritual conquests, the stability and force of its methods, which makes men *men* and not merely bigots or spiritual invalids . . . which has power and elasticity enough to adapt itself to all sorts and conditions of men." And to-day the Captain of our Salvation summons His Church militant not to a forlorn hope, but to certain and glorious victory. The call is to follow in the footsteps of a living, ever-present Christ, who needs men to live for Him—a far higher heroism, a more costly martyrdom than they of old were called to endure.

The message which we must bear is of the simplest kind. Let us boldly declare that our Church is one of growth and progress, not of stereotyped immobility. Let us fearlessly pro-

claim the message of Christian righteousness to all. A National Church ought to assert and act upon the belief that the service of the nation is the service of God.

Let us bid the rich man remember that wealth has not been entrusted to him merely that he should squander it. Let us remind the poor man that in giving bad work for good pay, in defrauding his employer, or tyrannising over his fellows, he is showing himself no better than the stock subjects of his denunciation.

Let us strive to make our National Church so wide and simple in its general affirmations—so fearless and honest in its pulpit utterances—that beside its noble breadth and sympathy, the narrowness and bigotry of sects shall wither away, and no intelligent follower of Christ need remain outside its fold.

Let us sink the differences of High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church in the recognition of the Comprehensive Church which can claim for its free use whatever is good and true and beautiful whenever found.

Let us strive to make the English Churchman feel that he is a member of an Imperial

Church, which, even as the Empire embraces different races and colours, shelters men of ever so divergent views who yet are one in their love and loyalty to Mother Church herself.

Let us sink, as far as possible, all petty partisan hatreds, and stand shoulder to shoulder in the army of Christ against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

If this is done, victory is sure, for on God's earth truth must at last prevail. Still, as of old—

“The Church's one Foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord.”

Still as of old, she must bear the burdens of the weak, she must bid the oppressor cease, she must work and pray, going on from strength to strength—

“Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.”

VII

THE SACRAMENTS

“ ‘He saves the sheep, the goats He doth not save.’
So rang Tertullian’s sentence, on the side
Of that un pitying Phrygian sect which cried :
‘ Him can no fount of fresh forgiveness lave,

Who sins, once wash’d by the baptismal wave’—
So spake the fierce Tertullian. But she sigh’d,
The infant Church ! of love she felt the tide
Stream on her from her Lord’s yet recent grave.

And then she smiled ; and in the Catacombs,
With eye suffused, but heart inspired true,
On those walls subterranean, where she hid
Her head, ’mid ignominy, death, and tombs,
She her Good Shepherd’s hasty image drew,—
And on His shoulders, not a lamb, a kid.”

M. ARNOLD.

“ What if they fail to find who seek amiss ?
To lose the centre is to lose the whole :
To such reporters be our answer this,
‘ I know Him through my soul. . . .’
One Christ for all, and fully Christ for each ;
So haply, as at Eucharist we knelt,
Something that thrilled us more than touch or speech
Has made its presence felt !
And round us drawn a lucid atmosphere
Of self-commending truth and love and might
And raised our faith from hearing of the ear
To sweet foretaste of sight.”

BRIGHT.

VII

THE SACRAMENTS

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—MATT. xxviii. 19, 20.

"This do in remembrance of me. . . . For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."—I COR. xi. 24, 26.

"THE tendency of human nature before its full At-one-ment to Divine life is to constant division. Religion has been implanted in man to break down the walls of separation between man and man, between man and God. All ordinances, therefore, which set forth the realities of life as one in God, are means for promoting the end of religion, which is universal sympathy and fellowship with the highest Will and Life."

In such words the author of "The Gospel of Divine Humanity" sets forth the meaning of sacraments.

Mr. Inge says, "A Christianity without Sacraments could never have converted Europe"; the need of Sacraments has been universally felt by mankind, and it has been met in much the same way—by attributing a mysterious efficacy to certain prescribed symbolical acts, which are generally chosen from the simplest and commonest functions of ordinary life, such as washing and eating.

The word Sacrament is older than Christianity. The Latin word *Sacramentum* signifies the military oath which was taken by a recruit after enlistment in the Roman army, and denotes a solemn pledge of faith on the part of the receiver. Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, in which he reports of the Christians, mentions their "meeting on a certain day, and binding themselves by a sacrament to commit no wickedness." As Pliny reports what the Christians told him, it is probable that they made use of the word *Sacramentum* in the Christian sense.

Our English Church defines a sacrament as

“An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.”

Two ceremonial acts alone were imposed by Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper—the one He adopted, the other He created as the material conditions of spiritual culture. If matter be the living garment of God, as we know it is the temporary raiment of man, and if the Divine Spirit be immanent in everything that exists, then it is easy to understand the benefit of Sacraments without falling into a low materialism. Our definition therefore restricts the meaning of the word to the two rites of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We are told that there are two distinct parts in a Sacrament, “the outward and visible sign” and the “inward and spiritual grace,” and these two ideas must be kept clearly and distinctly apart, or we at once fall into confusion of thought.

The outward sign as really and truly conveys the inward gift as the parchment deed, duly “signed, sealed, and delivered,” conveys pro-

perty to the purchaser ; and our Church very distinctly teaches that the one part of the Sacrament is a means of receiving the other ; unless we receive the outward and visible sign which Christ has ordained, we have no right to expect the inward and spiritual gift which He has promised.

As regards the method of their operation, we cannot and need not define.

The fact remains that these two Sacraments were selected and ordained by Christ to be means, in some way or other, of union and communion with Himself.

“ Had they been arbitrarily chosen things, we might,” as Dr. Illingworth says,¹ “ perhaps have been content to call them symbols. But they are very far indeed from being arbitrary inventions. They have a history behind them as old as humanity, and a context around them as wide as the world ; and they point us back to Sacramental customs of immemorial age.” . . . And if, as he goes on to show, these earlier rites derived reality and value from God’s immanence in the world, and found Him at particular times and places because He is

¹ Illingworth, “ Divine Immanence.”

everywhere present and ready to be found, the Christian sacraments must possess this reality in its highest degree. In their case it is further strengthened by the fact that they are Divine commands, and they carry with them the direct promise of a personal response to the personal allegiance which they claim. "When Christ ordained Sacraments, He selected, as their media, the two simplest, most symbolical, most universal religious rites—the sacred ablution and the sacred feast—and raised and re-enacted them in their purest forms to be thenceforward means of union with Himself."

In the Sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper—the essentials of life, spiritual and natural, are fully comprehended. All life consists in a constant purification from defilements, and in the assimilation or transformation of the lower nature into the higher.

BAPTISM.

"The Sacrament of Admission."

"Baptism," it has been well said, "is the oldest ceremonial ordinance that Christianity

possesses ; it is the only one which is inherited from Judaism." Immersion of the body in water is naturally symbolical and suggestive of purification ; so, in the sacrament of Baptism, the one essential of entrance into the kingdom of God is visibly set forth. It is a kingdom into which nothing unclean can enter, yet in Baptism the right of every man to inherit the kingdom is declared, and the condition of admission revealed.

The gospel of the kingdom is, that all can be made pure and fit to enter into fellowship with the Father of their spirits, because all men are *Sons of God*.

Baptism, therefore, is the token of an universal Church ; it is not the symbol of a sect, nor the badge of a party ; it is a visible witness to the world of a common humanity united in God.

Baptism proclaims every man the child of God, but it does not create him such ; if it did it would not be sacrament, but an event.

It does not make the fact, but it reveals it with authority ; it is not a conjuring trick by which something starts into being

within the child or man which was not there before.

The water can do no more than common water; the virtue of washing is not that it imparts anything to the washed, but rather that it removes obstructions to the inflowing and outflowing of life. So in the Sacrament of Baptism we put off, by God's grace, all that hinders us from knowing what we truly are—sons of God and heirs of eternal life.

There can be no doubt that in its original institution, and according to the practice of the early Christians, Baptism was by complete immersion, and this, we can readily understand, was a better type of complete purification than either sprinkling or pouring; but ordinances were made for man, not man for ordinances.

The genius of Christianity, as a living spiritual religion, is wholly adverse to scrupulosity regarding externals. As we touch nature equally in a grain of sand as in a mountain, the less or more of Matter in respect of Spirit is of small consequence.

Therefore, whether by immersion or sprink-

ling, Baptism is to us the outward sign of "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness" to which the Christian, in this act of public confession, commits himself.

Now the natural meaning of birth is not that we receive life, but that we are introduced into new conditions of life. So, "to be born again," or "regenerated" as the dogmatic phrase has it, is to be introduced into new spiritual conditions.

By being received into the family of God's people, incorporated into the Church, the baptized is introduced into new conditions, which are the atmosphere of Christian faith, that communion and fellowship of Christian life where the new life, the life in Christ, may be nourished and grow.

Our IXth Article very plainly declares the benefit of Baptism when it says, "there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized," that is, for those who, by repentance—a decisive act of the will, and faith—a public confession of belief, have placed themselves in right relations with God.

As regards infants, who cannot understand what is meant either by repentance or

faith, it follows that Baptism is simply a dedication of the child to Christ; it declares the child to be by birthright an heir of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven: it is a visible revelation of the truth that the Divine Nature is the true being of every child, and that the human nature is capable of reconciliation with the spiritual nature through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Further, it enforces upon parents and guardians the Divine obligation to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The baptized child has been made a member of the Church of Christ; he has been admitted into the greatest Society in the world, in consequence of the faith and desire of others; and surely this faith and desire bears witness to the solidarity of the Christian body, for in it, though the wants and responsibilities of the individual are never overlooked, there is always forcibly impressed upon him the fact that he is one of a vast brotherhood of the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant, the mystical body of Christ.

“God’s child in Christ adopted—Christ my all—
 What that earth boasts were not lost cheaply, rather
 Than forfeit that blest name, by which I call
 The Holy One, the Almighty God, My Father?
 Father! In Christ we live, and Christ in Thee—
 Eternal Thou: and everlasting We!
 The heir of heaven, henceforth I fear no death;
 In Christ I live! in Christ I draw the breath
 Of the true life!”

Now, as F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, said, this view of Baptism prevents all exclusiveness and spiritual pride, all condemnation and contempt of others; for it admits all to be God’s children; it proclaims a kingdom, not for a few favourites, but for all mankind; it protests against the idea that Sonship depends upon feeling; it asserts rather that it is a broad, grand, universal, and blessed fact. “*Beloved, now are we the Sons of God.*”

“Hail, then, hail to you all! To the heirdom of heaven
 be ye welcome!—
 Children no more from this day, but by covenant,
 brothers and sisters.
 Yet,—for what reason not children? of such is the
 kingdom of heaven.
 Here upon earth an assemblage of children, in heaven
 one Father.
 Ruling them all as His household.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"The Sacrament of Membership."

If, as we have seen, in Baptism we have the initiation rite into the body of Christ's Church, in the Lord's Supper we have the privilege of full membership, the great central act of worship, the great bond of union and fellowship.

The Holy Communion is the Sacrament of love, for it takes the act of brotherly communion, which is the expression of affection, and labels it Holy. Alas! that this Sacrament, which was meant to be the very bond of peace, the sign and pledge of Christian love, has been the bone of contention around which has been carried on the theological wranglings of centuries! Men have persisted in seeing in it a sign when they had the Apostle's word that "*Signs shall fail*"; they have sought to identify it with knowledge, when he had declared that "*Knowledge vanisheth away*"; they have missed in it the "*love which never faileth*."

It is the remembrance of the love of Christ ; in it we consecrate ourselves to His Service. It is the appointed means whereby we receive the Spiritual help we need for our Soul's welfare ; in it we declare our allegiance to Christ. It is to us the pledge of God's faithfulness.

As Canon Meyrick says : " We must combine the ideas of remembrance, sacrifice, feeding, incorporation, and pledge if we would attain as nearly to a complete notion and apprehension of the Lord's Supper as the nature of the mystery will admit, but if we regard any one of these ideas alone as an adequate expression of this Sacrament we shall only have a partial and warped conception of its full significance."

Following this advice as fully as may be, we note that the first distinctive meaning of the Lord's Supper is THE REMEMBRANCE of Christ ; wherein we " continue a perpetual memory of that, His precious death, until His coming again," and out of our remembrance of Him there comes naturally our return of praise and self-devotion ; in a purely spiritual act of faith we appropriate Christ and make Him the utterance of our offering to God.

“Look, Father, look on His anointed Face,
And only look on us as found in Him;
Look not on our misusings of Thy Grace,
Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim;
For lo! between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy Son our Lord.”

The work of Christ, commemorated in the Holy Communion, is what enables us to offer more or less imperfectly the one TRUE SACRIFICE—the sacrifice of the Will which He once offered perfectly. In the prayer of Oblation, which originally was part of the Consecration prayer, we ask our Heavenly Father to accept “our Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,” and in its original position this prayer brought out very clearly the whole idea of Sacrifice, connecting the “Remembrance” of the one great Sacrifice, pleading it before God, with our Eucharistic Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and our Dedicatory sacrifice of ourselves, “our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice.”

True self-sacrifice must always be for the love of other men, for all true sacrifice is essentially sharing; that a man finds his real life, his true self, in giving up the lower life for

others—this is the very essence of the Gospel which Christ taught to the world by His life and by His death.

We next come to the question, "How do we receive Christ in the Holy Communion?" for it is A FEEDING on Christ.

This is a question around which controversy has raged long and loud. The grossly materialistic doctrine which teaches that veiled under the elements of the bread and wine we actually eat the body and blood of Christ, is the result of an hypothesis which grew up in the ninth century among a rude and uneducated people, and gradually forced its way into the theology of the Western Church in the eleventh century. I need hardly say that it is opposed to the true and honest interpretation of Scripture.

When our Lord set apart bread and wine for the Holy Communion, He would have used the Greek verb for "*becomes*" instead of "*is*" if He had intended any change to have taken place in the elements; further, after consecration, we find that He still spoke of the wine as "the fruit of the vine," and S. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 27, 28) continues to call the

bread *bread* after consecration. In our own act of consecration, which is simply a rehearsal of the institution, the prayer is a petition that the outward and inward things may go on concurrently—"that we receiving these Thy creatures of bread and wine," may at the same time "be partakers of His most blessed body and blood."

But if the actual reported words of our Lord be taken in the most extreme literal sense they can never bear the signification put upon them by the theologians of the Council of Trent.

For if they be thus taken it is plain that they point to a separation of the body from the blood, and cannot be reconciled with any theory of "concomitancy" whereby "the body" is conceived to contain also "the blood," and "the blood" not to exist apart from "the body." If there ever was a change wrought in the elements of bread and wine it must have been on the occasion when our Lord Himself was the consecrator and the officiating priest. All questions as to the nature of the body of His Resurrection are, therefore, utterly out of place. If the words ever required a "transubstantiation" of the bread and wine to follow

their utterance, it was at the first celebration of the Lord's Supper. But to interpret them in that exceedingly forced manner is inconsistent with the acknowledgment of Christ's real humanity, and is, we maintain, a virtual denial of the truth that "*Jesus is come in the flesh*" (1 John iv. 2).

Moreover, in the second place, those words do not contain the slightest allusion to Christ's "soul and divinity" being present with the bread and the wine, of which Christ was then speaking.

Further, they are utterly inconsistent with the affirmation that "a whole Christ" is imparted under each "kind," that is, under both the bread and the wine. They can only, when literally interpreted, be explained to speak of the *dead* Christ, not of the *living*. For only in death did the separation spoken of take place; and then Christ's body became separated from His blood, and from His soul and divinity. It was to render such a separation possible that Christ took upon Himself "*flesh and blood*," as is significantly pointed out in Heb. ii. 14. The separation of His soul and body at Christ's death is distinctly

taught in all the ancient creeds of the Church.

It is to this fact our Lord alludes when He refers to the separation in His case of body and blood. For no sacrifice was ever offered in Jewish times in which the body and blood were not thus separated the one from the other; the flesh burned on the altar, the blood poured out around its base.

Again, the language used by our Blessed Lord points distinctly to His death on the Cross as if it had already taken place, for He speaks as a prophet, and uses prophetic language, which language is not to be interpreted in any bald, literal manner, but as speaking of that death and blood-shedding which took place a few hours later.

Our XXVIIIth Article further explains the mind of the Church when it states, "the Body of Christ is given, taken and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith." This should have been enough, once and for all, to condemn the mass of Materialistic and Manichæan ideas which have been developed

round this Sacrament of love; ideas which have been the parents of superstition, and have led to the material elements being *reserved* for the purpose of keeping a local so-called "Presence of Christ," where He might be adored and worshipped and carried about in procession, ideas which are entirely condemned by our Church.

In the bread and wine we English Churchmen, if we are true to our Prayer Book, see nothing but God's creatures set apart for a very sacred purpose, in obedience to Christ's command. The bold metaphors of eating flesh and drinking blood are meant to teach men that they must make Christ their Divine nutriment, they must absorb His mind, incorporate His character into their being, just as food is incorporated into the body. Nevertheless, as it has been beautifully expressed,¹ "just as a mother may say to the infant at her breast, 'Take eat, this is my body given for you,' so Christ through the Divine motherliness of the Holy Spirit says to each child of God in the Holy Communion, 'Take eat, this is My body given for you.' "

¹ "The Victory that Overcometh," by H. A. D.

Our Divine Life—the germ of Divinity—which God implants in each soul born in the world, can only grow through the continuous assimilation of Divine life which Christ offers to us in the Holy Communion.

In a sense every meal we take is sacramental ; but man does not live by bread alone, for that ministers only to his animal life. Man lives by every word of God, by intellectual and spiritual truth. So every thought we receive, every truth we make our own, is equally sacramental if God is recognised as the giver and the gift.

But humanity has not yet reached this perfect consciousness of the abiding presence of God. It is needful, therefore, that we should strive to discern Him somewhere ; and on special occasions, through the symbols of bread and wine, the flesh and blood of the Son of Man, the one complete specimen of the human race, are recognised as becoming for us and our brethren the flesh and blood of every son of man, and the Divinely appointed means by which we may know ourselves truly Sons of God ; for in this Sacrament the whole nature, body and spirit, is brought into contact with Christ.

Bishop Westcott reminds us that the original idea of sacrifice was a Communion of the worshipper and the God through the blood of some victim. The expression, "the blood is the life," is an idea older than Judaism. So to eat the flesh and drink the blood means to share the life.

Further, by communicating His life to us, Jesus Christ is ever, as a matter of actual human experience, taking away the sins of the whole world. The reality of the Divine Presence, therefore, lies not in the material elements, but in the hearts of the faithful Communicants who receive them; therefore I do not think that the anxious and ostentatious reverence which we often see paid to the unconsumed elements is either wise or wholesome. By the words of Administration in our Prayer Book we are expressly reminded that the elements of bread and wine are to be taken "*in remembrance,*" and our feeding is to be "*in the heart by faith with thanksgiving.*"

Christ has been known to many besides those friends at Emmaus in the breaking of bread, for there is under the conditions of every Celebration a Divine magnetism

quickenings all the faculties of the soul ; virtue goes out from the Holy Communion as from the body of Christ.

As regards Fasting Communion, a natural result of the false doctrines of Transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass, I can find no sanction for it, either in the Bible or the teaching of our Church ; the *Didaché* expressly tells us that in the Early Church the Holy Communion immediately followed a common meal. The question of Fasting, therefore, is a matter in which each individual may please himself ; if it helps any to bring their minds into a proper state of devotion, by all means let them practise it, provided they do not thereby encourage themselves or others in superstitious imaginations.

As to the best time for the celebration of the Holy Communion, we have no hard-and-fast rule ; there is a quiet and calm about the early morning hours which is very helpful to some minds ; getting up early is doubtless for many an act of self-denial, which has its own reward ; but I cannot forget that the hour of institution was after the evening meal, and the practice of the early Church in the Apostolic age was cer-

tainly evening Communion. To my mind the candles which appear on many of our Communion tables bear witness to the original practice of holding the Sacrament in the evening.

But in all controversies and disputes on these details it would be well if we remembered that the Sacrament was made for man and not man for the Sacrament.

It remains but to touch very briefly upon the idea of INCORPORATION, which is common to the two Sacraments. In Baptism we are made members of Christ's Church; by Holy Communion we receive further the assurance of "being very members incorporate in the mystical Body of God's Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people." We are to draw near, not only as Sons of God, but as brothers to all men, for in the Sacrament we are united in Christ to all Christ's people.

At the Lord's table we publicly declare our union and fellowship with each other, as well as with the Lord, and in both cases this is a progressive union.

Fellowship with Christ we need, if we would escape from the doom of all earthly things.

Fellowship with our brother man we need, if we would realise the Fatherhood of God.

It is only as members of a brotherhood that we can claim to receive the great privileges. Our Church forbids a Celebration unless three or four are gathered together, and a solitary Communion is rightly impossible, for, as I have tried to show, it is our response to the revelation of Fatherhood and Brotherhood. There is a deep mystery about our relation to our fellow-men, and we must feel that we should understand this mystery better if we loved God and our neighbour as He loves us both. It is a misuse of sonship if brotherhood is ignored.

The final point to notice is that it is also a PLEDGE. A pledge of the promise, "*Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*"; a pledge to the Christian of his forgiveness by God, and of his being a living member of His kingdom on earth, as well as of the promise of eternal life.

In conclusion, let me say very emphatically that we neglect these ordinances at our peril. How can we disobey our Lord's commands without virtually rejecting our allegiance to Him?

Do not let any make the excuse that they are unworthy to come to the Lord's table. To be unworthy is quite a different thing from receiving unworthily. The more unworthy we feel ourselves to be, provided this conviction of our sinfulness bring us to Christ, the more worthily we shall receive the Lord's Supper. The very best are unworthy; only those who are deeply conscious of their own unworthiness can communicate with any real propriety: each time we approach the Holy Table we use the words, "We do not presume to come to this Thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies."

Therefore, I declare to those who, from whatever cause, neglect their Lord's command, that they are forfeiting the greatest blessing of their lives. It is not for nothing that Christ has ordained that the chief means of union with Himself should have the outward form of food; for as our physical life is renewed regularly by physical food, so the spiritual life is to be communicated to us by Christ.

To-day the fulness of our lives demands that they should be wholly consecrated to God; and they can only be consecrated in union

with Christ, and by the keeping of His commands.

“ Oh, let our adoration for all that He hath done,
Peal out beyond the stars of God, while voice and life
are one !

And let our consecration be real, and deep, and true,
Oh, even now our hearts shall bow, and joyful vows
renew !

In glad and full surrender we give ourselves to Thee,
Thine utterly, and only, and evermore to be !
O Son of God, Who lovest us, we will be Thine alone,
And all we are, and all we have, shall henceforth be
Thine own ! ”

VIII

THE NATURAL AND THE
SPIRITUAL

*"Man knows partly but conceives beside,
Creeps ever on from fancies to the fact,
And in this striving—this converting air
Into a solid he may grasp and use—
Finds Progress—man's distinctive mark alone,
Not God's, and not the beasts', God is—they are—
Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be!"*

BROWNING.

*"Now—the sowing and the weeping,
Working hard and waiting long;
Afterward—the golden reaping,
Harvest home and grateful song.*

*Now—the long and toilsome duty,
Stone by stone to carve and bring;
Afterward—the perfect beauty
Of the palace of the King.*

*Now—the tuning and the tension,
Wailing minors, discord strong;
Afterward—the grand ascension
Of the Alleluia Song."*

F. R. HAVERGAL.

VIII

THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL

"The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."—I COR. xv. 45, 46.

THERE is a splendid myth in the Phædrus, in which Plato connects the position of men in their earthly life with their experience in an earlier existence. Each soul, he says, may be compared to a chariot with a winged pair of horses. In the Divine soul, both the horses are excellent, with perfect wings; in the human soul, one only of them is good, the other is violent and rebellious, often disobedient to the charioteer, and with feeble or half-grown wings.

Now at stated times there are high festivals in heaven, when Zeus, followed by the Divine hosts, goes forth to the outer boundary of the universe, and during its revolution they contemplate the pure essences and ideas, truth and reality ; they enjoy the vision of the Absolute—Justice, Temperance, Beauty and Science. The spectacle is the food of the heavenly nature, and with it gods and heroes fill themselves to the full in serene and untroubled tranquillity ; other unembodied souls follow in the celestial train, struggling to share the life-giving vision ; some with grievous effort catch fleeting glimpses of the heavenly righteousness and beauty there revealed, and so retain for another period their lofty state ; while others, baffled and beaten down, fail to gain the glorious sight, and falling to earth, are confined in mortal frames ; but since they still remember something of the truth which they have formerly seen, they cannot on their first embodiment sink below the state of man, and their place on earth is determined by the measure of their remembrance ; he who has seen and remembered most is born a philosopher ; he who has seen and remembered least is born a despot.

Now without discussing in detail this remarkable picture, which has supplied food for intellectual thought for ages, there are two central truths expressed which will help our consideration of S. Paul's words, quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

1. That which makes us men is our capacity for regarding the Eternal, the gift of the first Adam.

2. That which fixes our position in the scale of humanity is the energy of the Eternal within us, that energy by which we are freed from the dominion of all material and selfish aims, the gift of the second Adam.

S. Paul, quoting the sense rather than the exact words of the well-known passage in Genesis, says, "*The first man Adam was made a living soul*"; by which we understand a world-wide belief that we are not mere dust and ashes, although we may be formed out of the earth; but that there is a something in us which has matured during the struggle through life, a something in us which will not die. "Death only dies."

Man is both natural and spiritual; he carries about with him on earth the brute and the angel, the mortal and the immortal.

Now while science forbids us to believe that man is an excrescence upon the face of creation, a being out of all natural relation to the animals which surround him, it does not, and cannot, deny that he is possessed of a unique faculty which the animals have not. His bodily organism is, if you will, developed by the strictest process of natural law out of lower or less complex organism; but science cannot maintain that his mental and moral powers have been thus explained. Mr. S. Laing, in his work, "Modern Science and Modern Thought," tells us that there is an opening left for the belief concerning the origin of man; that "there was some supernatural interference with the laws of Nature, a germ or germs was caused to come into existence different from any that could have been formed by natural evolution, and containing within them the possibilities of conscious and civilised man, to be developed from the rudest origins by slow and painful progress over countless ages."

So when we compare the Christian revelation, that man was made a living soul, with the teaching by science of evolution, we are constrained to say that although the progress of

the human race was continuous and uniform, yet there was a point, a critical point, when a new power, a new life was introduced which was not the result of any past development. When the race had reached that stage of development at which it was fitted to receive a new power, the power was granted. The gift was given by God when the race was ready, or, as the Bible would express it, "*in the fulness of time*"; this is the Christian view of the matter.

It may be objected here that this implies a breach of continuity. Well, as Christians let us face it. The law of continuity may be a good principle of scientific investigation, but it is not a fetish before which we must bow down and worship. Physical formulæ are not wanting in which discontinuity is plainly involved.

Further, to speak with certainty of what did or did not happen in the remote ages of creation is in the highest degree presumptuous.

In Nature we indeed see orderly progression, but we also see fresh levels of creation, fresh products, new phenomena.

"First, void and formless chaos, then order, then inorganic matter, then organic life, then

rational life when men built and plowed, then intellectual life when they thought and reasoned, then spiritual life when they worshipped and heard the first lisps of an awakening voice which said 'I must, I ought, I will.'"

Carry your imagination back to the time when there was only inorganic matter, and you see the first living cell of protoplasm, you see the first creeping worm and flying bird. It is a new departure, the birth of a new order ; the future no longer resembles the past.

Imagine yourself present when the first rational being protects his life by artificial means, and speaks and thinks and reasons. It is a new departure, the birth of a new order ; the future no longer resembles the past.

Now, in the fulness of time comes the Spiritual Man. He exhibits power over the material world. He dies and rises again. It is a new departure, the birth of a new order ; the future no longer resembles the past.

It is supernatural, that is, beyond nature as we know her up to this time, but it is natural in that it is only one other order added to her progressive series ; it is a new vital energy.

In man we notice that his material body can, to a certain extent, adapt itself to his spiritual ends. In the New man the material body is absolutely subservient to the Spirit. Supernatural? Yes, but entirely natural. The orderly progress—chaos, cosmos, inorganic, organic, rational, intellectual, spiritual, these are the intervals of the ascending scale. Surely S. Paul saw this when he tells us that the order was "*that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural and afterward that which is spiritual*"? "*The first Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam,*" the Christ, the beginner of the new order, "*was made a quickening spirit.*"

The first Adam marks a crisis in the history of the human race, to which all the previous history of the animal creation pointed as its goal and final cause. And so with the second head of the human race. The Divine purpose in creation was, we may well believe, that human nature might be raised to its perfection by being brought into union with God.

And to Christ all the previous history of mankind pointed, whether Jew or Gentile, Greek or Barbarian. He came in "*the fulness*

of time," at that precise moment when the human race was ready for Him; but still the development which prepared could not produce; the Incarnation, like the creation, was not a mere result of development, it was a fresh crisis.

When the first Adam was made a living soul the race was endowed with gifts which, as we have said, were in no sense the natural results of its past growth, and the same may be said of the gifts of Christ—Christ in the power and glory of His resurrection.

We entirely mistake the position of Christianity as the absolute religion if we fail to see that our Lord claims not only to be the way and the truth, but also the life. He puts new possibilities of spiritual growth within our reach. In Him, as in Adam, a new source of spiritual energy is found. "*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*"

And everything in the supernatural order, from Baptism to the last Sacrament we receive, is designed to keep us in full union with this new power, "*the power of the resurrection,*" which has changed human life.

But we must remember that change, though it is often spoken of in the Epistles as a passing from death unto life, is no magical thing, no sudden transformation, by which the old sinful nature is exchanged for a holy nature. The baptized child is promised no immunity from temptation, no absolute protection from sin, when he receives "*that thing which by nature he cannot have.*" The fact that he is made "*a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,*" does not turn him into a "saint" in the popular sense, which, of course, is not the Bible sense of that word; but it draws him within the circle of that Divine power, puts him, if we may say so, into relation, eye, and conscious relation, with that Divine power which with Christ entered into Man, and in Christ conquered sin.

So the new-born Christian has got to realise his greatness, not to make himself great; and it is the mission of the Church to bring men to Christ, the life-giving Spirit, and to help every one of her members to realise his greatness. Only, as the late Aubrey Moore so fitly noted, "she does not draw the line between the baptized and the unbaptized in such a way

as to imply that the work of Christ extends only to the members of the Divine Society." It is they only who know the fulness of the privilege of the sons of God, but it was the whole of human nature that the eternal Son lifted into God.

It is this fact which makes Christianity begin so differently from all those other systems, philosophical or religious, which have helped to raise man. It does not promise something as conditional on man's effort, but it calls out the highest effort by reminding him what the love of God has made him. "*Now are ye the sons of God—ye were the servants of sin once—ye are risen with Christ, therefore seek those things which are above.*"

Further, I note that as the gifts given to the human race in the person of the first Adam have never been entirely lost, so the Second Adam brings new endowments, new energy, which we may neglect, but of which we cannot get rid.

The responsibilities of humanity were as truly permanently increased at the crisis of the Incarnation as at the crisis of Creation.

As each new order comes in, it comes to

stay ; but we must never forget that the progress of all natural evolution is slow. Scientists tells us of the enormously long periods which have elapsed between the introduction of a new order and the rise of that order into pre-eminence and perfection. We may learn, too, that each fresh attainment of Nature has been followed by a relapse,—evolution ever climbing after some ideal good, and reversion ever dragging evolution in the mud.

Therefore let us learn patience whilst we ask : What are the practical issues involved in this conception of our heritage, as alike sons of Adam and sons of God?

Our present duty and our hopes of an eternal future are both affected.

The natural man belongs essentially to this present order of things ; he is endowed simply with a high quality of the natural animal life, but it is life of so poor a quality that from a Christian point of view it is hardly life at all. Hear the Apostle : "*He that hath not the Son of God hath not life, but he that hath the Son hath life.*"

"Christ our life" has indeed been the only doctrine from Paul to Augustine, from Calvin

to Newman ; yet, when the Christian is cross-examined upon this confession, it is astonishing to find what uncertain hold it has upon his mind. Is spiritual life as real to us as natural life? "*There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body,*" says the Apostle ; that is, we have a physical body, and then we have a spiritual body within that body, and there is a something we call mind, which is in connection with our spiritual body, and which is engaged all through life in building up the spiritual body, which is ever going on growing, a life within a life.

If then we believe that there is this spiritual body within us, and if we believe that at death, when the shock comes and separates the spiritual from the natural, we may allow our physical body to crumble away, and yet in a new sense say with the Latin poet, "*Non omnis moriar,*" since that thing which the play of the forces of our mind has been building up within us is that body with which we are going to proceed into the new world—then surely life's responsibility is great, for day by day we are building up that kind of body which is to represent ourselves by and by.

We are preparing for ourselves, through the action of our minds upon our spiritual bodies, the kind of life which we are to lead in the future. We are preparing the sort of feelings, the sort of desires, aspirations, and capabilities which will not only land us in another world, but will also determine our place in "that country from whose bourn no traveller returns."

As Christians we may well believe that to every man at birth there is assigned a task, that every life has an ideal aspect interpenetrating its visible manifestations. And we may further understand that as each one does the allotted task, and succeeds in making the actual life resemble the ideal, in that degree each one is a partaker of salvation.

"Wherefore, beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." That word, "*God which worketh in you,*" becomes no mere figure of speech; it means our nature is not merely human, for it is taken into God; it means that the ideal man is to be wrought out, or rather the Ideal works itself out in us, shining in our darkness, strengthening our feeble wills and

quickenings our languid desires until the time comes when, to change the metaphor, the chrysalis shall burst its shell and leave it to decay, while it soars into the unknown splendours of the future life.

But we cannot think of the present life as a discipline without letting our thoughts travel forward. It is a discipline; and, we ask, a discipline for what? We can give no detailed answer. There are hints in Scripture that once more there will be a turning-point in the history of humanity.

"In my Father's house are many mansions," that is, "resting-places," or "stations on a high road for the traveller." The Father's house, the universe, consists of many stations along the road to perfection. Death is merely the passing into yet another stage. All that is valuable in character and experience survives, and every fresh stage opens up fresh vistas to the soul's vision. It may be that our present earth life is the stage when we begin to learn the alphabet of existence.

When the gifts of the Incarnation have been put to right use, when sin has been conquered and we have learnt to realise the "life in

Christ" of which the Apostles speak with such joy and certainty, there may be once more a critical point, and then an endless progress—a progress in that knowledge of God which is eternal life.

More we do not know; to guess would be idle. Enough to feel that "*now we are the sons of God, though it doth not yet appear what we shall be.*" We only know that we are weaving each one at the loom of our own destiny.

Therefore, in the beautiful words of an unknown poet—

"Let us take to our hearts a lesson—no lesson can
braver be—

From the ways of the tapestry weavers on the other
side of the sea.

Above their heads the pattern lies; they study it with care
The while their fingers deftly weave, their eyes are
fastened there.

They tell this curious thing, besides, of the patient,
plodding weaver:

He works on the wrong side evermore, but works for
the right side ever.

It is only when the weaver stops, and the web is
loosed and turned,

That he sees his real handiwork—that his marvellous
skill is learned.

Ah! the sight of its delicate beauty, how it pays him
for all it cost!

No rarer, daintier work than his was ever done by the
frost.

The years of men are the looms of God, let down
from the place of the sun,

Wherein we are weaving alway till the mystic web is
done.

Weaving blindly, but weaving surely, each for himself
his fate,

We may not see how the right side looks; we can
only weave and wait;

But, looking above for the pattern, no weaver hath
need to fear;

Only let him look clear into Heaven, the Perfect
Pattern is there."

Therefore let us frame our lives "*Looking
unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our
faith.*"

IX

EPIPHANY IN MIRACLE

*"The world of Matter with its various forms,
All dies into new Life. Life born from death
Rolls the vast mass, and shall for ever roll!
No single Atom,—once in Being,—lost,
With change of counsel charges the MOST HIGH . . .*

Can it be?

*Matter immortal! and shall Spirit die?
Above the nobler, shall less noble rise?
Shall Man alone, for whom all things revive,
No resurrection know? Shall Man alone,—
Imperial Man—be sown in barren ground,
Less privileged than grain on which he feeds? . . .
Still seems it strange that thou shouldst live for ever?
Is it less strange that thou shouldst live at all?
This is a miracle, and that no more!
WHO gave beginning, can exclude an end!"*

YOUNG.

*"What are the Laws of Nature? To me perhaps the
rising of One from the dead were no violation of these Laws,
but a confirmation; were some far deeper Law, now first
penetrated into, and by Spiritual Force (even as the rest have
all been) brought to bear on us with its Material Force."*

CARLYLE.

IX

EPIPHANY IN MIRACLE

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory."—JOHN ii. 11.

EPIPHANY, or "manifestation," is the characteristic idea underlying the whole of the Gospel message. It implies the being of that which is manifested before it is made known.

The Gospel is not the proclamation of a transformation in God, but rather the unveiling of an object-lesson of the eternal character of the Infinite Originator of all things, and of His unchanging love towards the world.

When the eternal "Logos" or "Reason" of the Father became Flesh, He did so that the human mind might form its conceptions of God under familiar conditions of thought; but we must ever remember that the phase of God's character, embodied in Jesus, did not

then first begin to be. It always was; but at the Incarnation it was objectively and unmistakably manifested.

That this manifestation should be accompanied by signs and wonders, powers and mighty works, is not surprising to the devout Christian. It is no wonder that He whose name is "Wonderful" does works of wonder. It would be passing strange if He did them not. He must, out of the necessity of His higher being, put forth works greater than man's.

I. "*This beginning of miracles*"¹ is indeed a fit introduction to all other miracles. No other miracle has so much prophecy in it, no other would have inaugurated so fitly the whole work of the Son of God, which was characterised throughout as an ennobling of the common, a turning of the water of earth into the wine of heaven.)

(We recall the first miracle of Moses, the turning of water into blood, symbolic of that

¹ That is, after our Lord's baptism, for we have good reason to believe that until Jesus was thus commissioned and began to proclaim the kingdom of God He might do no such works.

law which, as S. Paul said, was "*a ministration of death.*" Here the Saviour's first miracle, a ministration of life, symbolised the turning of the thin and watery elements of Jewish faith into that richer and nobler Christianity which makes saints out of sinners, and a new Paradise of God out of the wilderness of earth.

Yet from the early days of Celsus and Porphyry, down to the days of Spinoza and Hume, Paulus and Strauss, the miracles of our blessed Lord have been assaulted. To-day, in no small realm of literature, the impossibility of miracles is calmly insisted upon as a discovery which needs no demonstration; their invention is attributed to an imaginative reverence, their reception to an ignorant credulity, the present belief in them to the cant of an interested hypocrisy, or to woeful deficiency of intellect; while others treat them with a conspiracy of silence, an agreement of contemptuous indifference.

Are we timidly to admit these haughty assertions? Are we, the successors of those who overcame the world, to accept the patronising condescension which is willing to spare our venerable prejudices? Nay, unshaken

amid the storm of contempt, we reply that it requires a loftier height of intelligence to believe in miracles than to reject them, because it involves the realisation and the recognition of wider than purely physical laws. Can it be, we ask, with Dean Farrar in his Hulsean lectures,¹ "so decisive a sign of contemptible inferiority to hold a faith which was dear to the heart and acceptable to the intellect, I will not say of a Milton only or a Bossuet, but of philosophers and mathematicians, of biologists and astronomers, of a Haller and a Pascal, of a Copernicus and a Kepler, of a Bacon and a Ray? Have we in the last century discovered laws so far more general than the law of gravitation, that the belief in miracle which was so natural to a Newton should be drivelling to us?"

Let us thoroughly understand that the issue before us is distinct and definite. To every honest mind it is clear that if miracles be incredible, Christianity is false. If Christ wrought no miracles, then the Gospels are untrustworthy; if Christ rose not from the dead—which is a stupendous miracle—"then is our

¹ "The witness of History to Christ," Farrar.

preaching vain and your faith is also vain—ye are yet in your sins—yea, and we are found false witnesses of God.” Eliminate miracles from the Gospel records, and then though there remains a moral system, noble and pure, yet it is a moral Deism, a Christianity without a Redeemer.

If it be true that the growth of science and civilisation are incompatible with a belief in miracles, then must science and civilisation listen for the voice of some new Saviour, for then is Christianity dead. The miracle of the Christian Church gives the lie to this statement

II. I wish to suggest a position in which we may regard miracles as a rational and credible element in the revelation of our Saviour.

If we admit, on the one hand, that the force in Nature is the will of God, who through the whole process of the universe has been working up to a moral product in the character of man ; and if, on the other hand, we admit that there is such a thing as sin in humanity, sin which has disturbed the Divine order of the world, and made it necessary for God to manifest Himself for the restoration of His own creation ;

then surely we begin to see the reasonableness of miracles.

What is a miracle? Bishop Gore, in his Bampton lectures,¹ has defined it as "an event in physical nature, which makes unmistakably plain the presence and direct action of God working for a moral end."

(God, we know, is always present and working in Nature, and man was meant to recognise and praise Him in the ordinary course of events; but, in fact, man's sin has blinded his spiritual eye, he has lost the power of seeing behind physical order. The prevalence of law in nature, which is its glory and perfection, has even led men to forget God and deny His presence. Now in a miracle God so works that man is forced to notice a presence which is no mere blind force, but a loving personal will; God breaks into the common order of events, in order to manifest the real meaning of nature.

~~"Miracle was duly wrought when, save for it, no faith was possible.~~

~~Whether a change were wrought i' the shows o' the world,~~

¹ Gore, Bampton lecture, 1891.

Whether the change came from ~~our~~ minds which see of
the shows o' the world so much as and no more
Than God wills for this purpose."¹

Hence miracles are God's protests against man's blindness ; protests in which He violates a superficial uniformity in the interests of deeper law.

"Love, Creation's final law."

We must clearly understand that the miracles of our Lord, or of His disciples are in no case spoken of as violations, or even suspensions of law, any further than as the operations of a higher law may be said to interfere with a lower law : a stone held in the hand is no suspension of the law of gravitation. To say that a miracle is an event in which God does something contrary to the order of Nature is a mere rationalistic quibble. Augustine expressed the truth long ago, "Non contra naturam sed contra quam est nota natura !"

Where is a man to be found who will assert that he knows all about the laws of Nature? What are we to think of the intellectual outfit

¹ "A Death in the Desert," Browning.

of a man who will deny the existence of what he does not know ?

When we speak of "laws of God," or "laws of nature" we must remember that *laws* of God exist only for us : it is a *will* of God for Himself. That will, being the highest wisdom and love, excludes all wilfulness. It is a will upon which we can securely count. From the past expressions of it, we can presume its future, and so we rightly call it a law ; but still, from moment to moment, it is a will ; and so, while miracles exceed the laws of *our* nature, it does not follow that they exceed the laws of *all* nature. We often allow ourselves to be misled when we talk of the uniformity of nature. Nature is a progressive order ever admitting of new departures.

Now on the Christian hypothesis, Christ is a new nature. "*The word was made flesh,*" and as a new nature it is surely to be expected that He will exhibit new phenomena ; a new vital energy will radiate from Him, for the very springs of Universal life are in Him. So, in Christ, we naturally expect the material body to exhibit a far higher degree of subservience to spirit, than was ever known before ; for be it

remembered, Christ's miracles were not meaningless portents; they were redemptive acts, object-lessons teaching the same lessons of love and mercy as His words conveyed. Given the perfect man, who is Lord of Nature, surely the wonder lies in the limitation of His power, and not in any manifestation of it. Given the required conditions of spiritual life, nothing which does not involve contradiction is impossible. To Him who could work, not merely on nature, but on that substance, spirit, and life which underlies and makes nature, changing water into wine, and stilling a storm, were works as surely according to unvarying law as the natural growth of the vine and the calming of the tempest. We have to attain results, often laboriously and painfully, because we work, not on substance, but merely on surface appearances or phenomena, while the Spiritual Man worked directly.

(The more we contemplate the personality of Jesus Christ and His moral authority and purpose, the more, I believe, we shall find that His miracles were according to the law of His being; or, to use an expression of Athanasius, they were "in rational sequence." *run on*)

And if, as Dr. Sanday says,¹ we thus take the personality of our Lord as the true *rationale* of miracle, "Many things will be clear to us that would not be clear otherwise." The Old Testament and the New Testament together form a whole; the one prepares the way for, or runs up into, the other. The central point in the Old Testament revelation was that God is a living God; that the world is not a dead world, but instinct with life which is all derived from Him. The New Testament takes up this and tells us that Christ the Word was the light and life of man.

Life is of all forms of energy the most plastic, the most creative. When, therefore, we think of our Lord Jesus Christ as impersonated or incarnate Life, it is no surprise to us to find in Him the creative and formative properties of life reach their culmination.

III. To me, as a Christian, the entire question of miracles resolves itself into a matter of historical evidence. Every story of a miracle must be judged on its own merits. Now as regards the inadequacy of testimony to establish a miracle, scepticism has never advanced

¹ Paper read at the Church Congress, 1902.

beyond blank assertion. Of Hume's favourite formula, "that it is more probable that testimony should be mistaken than that miracles should be true," Mr. Mill, one of our greatest modern logicians, remarks, that this reduces itself to the very harmless proposition, that anything is incredible which is contrary to a complete induction. The evidence for some of the miracles—the Resurrection, for instance¹—is as good as the evidence for most other events, which we accept as historical. It is difficult to imagine how it could have been stronger; at the same time it is naturally insufficient to convince those who admit that no evidence in the world would convince them of such a fact.

The same may be said of all other miracles; the strongest evidence on certain subjects leaves certain people where it found them—incredulous. If evidence—and close historical evidence—is worth anything, unaccountable things have happened in all ages of the world. One may explain away a vast number of cases, but some will remain that cannot be explained.

Take, for example, the question of Spiritual-

¹ See p. 184.

ism. So far the scientific world has offered us no adequate explanation of these phenomena. It certainly has proved what we all knew long ago, that there is much imposture associated with it; but it is the residuum of fact which puzzles us, and which both men of science and conjurers are challenged to investigate. Now while I have no theory on this subject, and I feel that it is best for us to hold aloof from such phenomena until the scientific basis has been rendered more secure, yet I do wish to state what I believe to be true, that even to-day there is a class of phenomena in our midst which, so far, cannot be explained; and I may be reasonably allowed to hope that the many thousands in the civilised world who share this belief are neither born fools nor confirmed lunatics.

IV. As regards the evidential value of miracles themselves, our blessed Lord, so far from urging them as evidence of His doctrine, expressly requires faith as a condition precedent to the exercise of His power; in Nazareth He could do no mighty works because of the people's unbelief (Matt. xiii. 58). He predicted that, in later times, false Christs should arise

and show such miracles as would deceive many (Matt. xxiv. 24). Further He depreciated miracles in comparison with teaching; "*Believe me,*" My Person, Myself, "*or else believe me for the very work's sake*"; here He puts the person before the miracle, or rather, I should say, the moral miracle before the physical.

If we turn to the records of History, we find that when the Gospel had to face the vast forces of Gentile heathendom miracles declined, and then absolutely ceased. Thus, for eighteen hundred years, silence—in the domain of the miraculous—has continued to reign.

Now, it may be asked, since God exercised His power to interfere with what we call the ordinary course of nature in the days of the Son of Man and during the Apostolic age, in connection with the establishment of Christianity, why has He not done so since, for the maintenance of it? We reply that miracles do not and did not constitute the foundation of Christianity.

Nor did the reception of Christianity depend on miracles. "The silence of Heaven" as regards the discontinuance of miraculous

powers in the Church since the Gospel was addressed to the Gentile world, is accounted for, Dr. Anderson contends,¹ on the ground that the miracles of Christ recorded in the four Gospels and in the earlier chapters of the Acts of the Apostles had special reference—as evidence—to the Jews only. The miracles of Christ, it is urged, were precisely such as accorded with the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, and were designed to accredit the Teacher rather than His teaching. “It is nowhere suggested,” writes the author, concerning the miracles of our Lord, “that they were given to accredit the teaching; their evidential purpose was solely and altogether to credit the Teacher. It was not merely that they were miracles, but they were such miracles as the Jews were led by their Scriptures to expect. Their significance depended on their special character and their relation to a preceding revelation accepted as Divine by those for whose benefit they were accomplished.” The Holy Scripture henceforth took up a position of supremacy. God had finally spoken in His Son.

¹ “The Silence of God,” Anderson.

Christ
He required then, as He requires now, a faith based on reason and not on miracles. Consequently, a miracle does not prove the truth of a doctrine; for the doctrine must first commend itself to the conscience as *good*, and only then can the miracle seal it as *divine*. "Miracula sine doctrinâ nihil valent." Therefore we must look in every miracle, not only for the Divine power, but also for the Divine Wisdom and Goodness. A miracle is not a wonder, but a sign, so that the inward meaning is more important than the outward form.

The act of turning water into wine did not of itself make the glory of Christ; it only "*manifested*" the glory that was in Him. So it is more correct for us to say with Archbishop Trench,¹ "We believe the miracles for Christ's sake, rather than we believe Christ for the miracles' sake." Our Lord's divinely human life was the substantial ground for all His mighty works. He stands, if we may so express it reverently, at the meeting-point of Humanity and Divinity—in Him the two words do not denote two natures, but rather

¹ Trench, "Notes on the Miracles."

the perfect union of what to us is two natures. For in Him dualism has no place; He is perfect Human because He is Divine, and Divine because He is perfect Human, and the extent and completeness of His power to deal with substance was due, I conceive, to this fact. We are, of necessity, constrained to believe in the reality of His life, because no mind, before or since, could have imagined, or have even fully comprehended, such a life when revealed.

It was easier, if one may say so, for the Lord of life to change water into wine, than to change the nature of the 'unbelieving multitude, because there was no resistance in nature to overcome; while in human nature the resistance, for the time being, was invincible. When the disciples came from John, asking for signs of Christ's Messiahship, the last and greatest enumerated was "*the poor have the Gospel preached to them.*" In Jewish and profane history one may read records of scores of miracles, but never before, in any nation, had a full Gospel been preached to the poor.

Our Lord ever assigned to the moral

evidences of His Divine Mission the first place in point of importance. The eighth chapter of S. John shows how entirely He bases His reasoning on the self-evidencing power of His Divine Person. Yet I believe that in the coming age sober historical criticism will leave us those beliefs about Christ's person which are most cherished among ordinary Christians, namely, the general accorded fact that "*Jesus Christ went about doing good and healing divers diseases*" by means of extraordinary spiritual capacities, and the further fact that after His death there occurred to His disciples visions of Himself which were not mere subjective delusions, and which confirm for them and for us the fact of His continued life and love for His followers.

V. To an observant and critical age such as ours, the only Epiphany that would make any appeal lies in the regular, orderly, and uniform miracle of Nature, and surely in the daily miracles of Nature, whereby the corn ripens and the fruits grow, there is a manifestation of God as truly as in the changing of water into wine. It is, moreover, the deepest general experience of all Christians that the super-

natural is acting upon them daily. God speaks, God warns, God draws men to-day ; we stand with a foot in two worlds, the visible and the invisible, and it is in the present working of God in our Souls, converting, purifying, strengthening and inspiring them, that the miraculous is most clearly seen.

It may be true that miracles can never resume the foremost place they had a century ago in Christian evidences : for the foundations of spiritual life must ever be laid on the Rock of Ages. "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*"

Yet they are pledges, first-fruits, I believe, of that larger promise, "*The works that I do, ye shall do also, and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father.*" The Church lives in faith and hope of this promise, and if taunted by the world with its present non-fulfilment, she may well reply, in the spirit and words of her Lord, "*Mine hour is not yet come.*" When she has been accounted worthy of receiving a larger measure of the gifts of the Spirit, then faith will give the sure consciousness of the power, when that power may be profitably exercised.

In early days, we may well believe her members were, through their deep sense of the abiding presence of Christ, elevated, for a short period, above their real attainments ; but as their first love and zeal failed, as they were certain to fail, so their extraordinary fruits of faith decayed. When the members of Christ's Body grow up wholly and naturally to spiritual perception and power, then all the gifts of the Spirit will become manifest, in even greater perfection than in the infancy of Christianity, and will abide with us, being freely imparted for the health and advancement of the whole world.

Now, indeed, we know but in part, and in part only can we teach, but it will not always be so ; we wait in expectation and patience for the revelation of glory—the far-off Divine event to which the whole Creation moves when “ *We shall know fully even as also we have been known.* ”

“The acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.”

I append the following points, which are worthy of thought as

EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION.

1. What happened to the body of our Saviour if He did not rise with it?

The Swoon theory has admittedly broken down; the Ghost theory is given up; the Imposture theory is relegated with contempt to the last century. Either the Jews had that Holy Body, or the disciples. If the Jews, then why did they not produce it, and confound the story of the disciples? If the disciples, could they have asserted, without imposture, that He had risen? If neither, what can we think but that the body which lay in the tomb was the same body, glorified and transfigured, which convinced a Thomas of its reality, and was seen by five hundred people? (1 Cor. xv. 6).

Renan writes: "The starting-point of all discussions touching the resurrection of Jesus is the material fact that on the morning of the third day after the crucifixion the tomb in which His body had been laid was found empty."

Professor Gardner, in his "Exploratio Evangelica," says, "In my opinion the empty grave offers us a problem which objective history can never solve."

2. How did Sunday begin?

Why did a body of Jews suddenly change their holy day from Saturday to Sunday? It would have been to Friday if they were keeping the death-day of their old Master. Something must have happened on that day, which they thought far greater than even His death.

3. What started the Christian Church?

It would scarcely be the sight of a dead peasant on the cross—a great effect demands a great cause.

4. How came it that the man Saul became S. Paul?

What convinced a man of such intellectual attainments? What evidence overpowered his admitted bias on the other side? He had consulted eye-witnesses, for he tells us that the greater part of the five hundred "remain unto this present."

5. Take the evidential character of the Holy Communion: is it conceivable that such a

service, enshrining the memory of the death of our Lord, should be used as a thanksgiving service for nineteen centuries unless some great deliverance had succeeded the catastrophe?

6. Further, the Gospels are unanimous as to the fact that Christ rose, that the tomb was opened and found vacant. Through the record of the various appearances there is a very remarkable conception of the risen body, as something which was indeed material and capable of materialisation, even unto the old condition of the body, so that He could eat and drink and be touched, but which was now ethereal in its character, passing through natural obstacles, appearing and disappearing, so that He no longer lived on earth, but "*manifested Himself*" to witnesses according to their state of mind. It was a manifestation, no longer belonging to the lower material life as we know it, but raised above it into a condition in which the body was purely and simply the transcendent organ of the spiritual faculty—"a *spiritual body*." The records of the appearances are remarkable in their agreement in giving a picture of something of which there was

no experience in the minds of the authors from which it could be copied, and all this is in a region where human invention would have been sure to be grotesque and gross.

X

PRAYER

*"Be not afraid to pray!—to pray is right—
Pray (if thou canst) with hope; but ever pray,
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay!
Pray in the darkness, if there be no light!
Far is the time, remote from human sight,
When war and discord on the earth shall cease;
Yet every prayer for universal peace
Avails the blessed time to expedite!
Whate'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven,
Though it be what thou canst not hope to see:
Pray to be perfect, though material heaven
Forbid the spirit so on earth to be:
But if for any wish thou dar'st not pray,
Then pray to GOD to cast that wish away."*

H. COLERIDGE.

*"The lonely sufferer is still a fellow-worker with HIM;
. . . a sleepless voice of Intercession, unheard by man, but
borne to GOD by a 'surrendered soul,' may bring strength to
combatants wearied with a doubtful conflict."*

WESTCOTT.

*O, who can tell how many hearts are altars to His praise,
From which the silent Prayer ascends through patient
nights and days!
The sacrifice is offered still in secret and alone,
O World, ye do not know them, but HE can help His own.
They are with us,—His true Soldiers,—they come in power
and might,
Glorious the crown which they shall gain after the
heavenly fight;
And you, perchance, who scoff, may yet their glory share,
As the rich spoil of their battle, and the Captives of their
Prayer!"*

A. PROCTER.

X

PRAYER

" . . . In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."—
PHIL. iv. 6.

PRAYER is the characteristic action of all religion.

Whenever man has believed a higher power to exist he has assumed as a matter of course that he can, and may, enter into communion with such a power ; hence prayer is the very heart and centre of all religion.

As Christians we may say that prayer is the aspiration of the whole being God-ward. Tennyson well defined it when he said, "Prayer is the lifting up of the sluice-gate between me and the Infinite." I think it is easy for us to understand this figure. Just as

by the opening of the sluice-gates of a lock the water from the higher level flows down to the lower level and causes the boat to rise until it is upon the plane of the higher level, so prayer lifts the sluice-gate between the finite and the infinite.

Man belongs to the eternal kingdom of mind ; because he can think, because he can feel, aspire, and adore he is an immortal spirit.

The great kingdom of mind is ruled over by God Himself. He is Mind, He is Will, He is Spirit, and we men have that mind and will and spirit in common with Him ; it is this fact that makes it possible for us to believe in prayer. Man is mind, God is mind, and man is bound to God and God is bound to man by a union which is indissoluble and eternal.

When I turn to the Gospels I find that Christ based all His prayers on the Fatherhood of God. When He gave us the model prayer He bade us begin it always with the words "*Our Father.*"

If, therefore, we have faith in our hearts that God is "*our Father,*" if we have given ourselves to Him as true sons, then we have

all the instinct and argument for prayer that we require.

We often hear people say: "What is the good of praying? Does not God always know beforehand what we want?" Now, let us grant that it is the judgment of reason as well as the assurance of Christ that our "*Father knoweth the things we have need of before we ask Him,*" yet the prime object of prayer is not to inform God or to drag down His wisdom to the level of our folly; the object of prayer is to educate us in intercourse with God. We are sons of God, capable of intelligent correspondence with our Father, capable of fellowship and communion with Him in the spirit. And to train us for this mighty end now, in the childhood of our immortal life, even though we babble as children, we must learn to pray; and, just as it was natural for us when boys and girls to go to our earthly fathers and mothers with stories of our childish wants and troubles, or, as years went on, with stories of our youthful aims and aspirations, so is it natural for us to go to our Heavenly Father in the same fashion.

But let us remember that the essence of

prayer is not asking, but communion and fellowship with the Father of our spirits. The main object of our prayers must be spiritual things, for we are taught to pray in the name of Christ—that is, to pray as those whose mind is Christ's mind, whose point of view is Christ's point of view, and whose wishes are Christ's wishes. The prayer which secures its own answer is not that which expresses our own shortsighted wants but the will and purpose of Christ ; at the back of all our intercessions must be submission to the Father's will. He knoweth best, for, as Shakespeare puts it—

“We, ignorant of ourselves,
 Beg often our own harm, which the wise powers deny us
 For our good ; so find we profit by losing of our prayers.”

And the poet who, when versifying a line of Plato, wrote—

“Not what we wish, but what we want
 Thy bounteous grace supply ;
 The good unasked in mercy grant,
 The ill, tho' asked, deny,”

but echoed the words of the Great Master :
“Thy will be done.”

If this full and grand conception of prayer had been more fully kept before people's eyes, we should never have heard the sneering description that the object of prayer is to try to make God do what He does not want to do. Such a sneer would have had no power if the more Christlike conception of prayer had been widely current.

The modern difficulties of prayer are chiefly concerned with the material side of our petitions, with prayer in its secondary aspect. There are still many who feel that they ought to leave out of their communion with God everything that relates to the purely materialistic state. Let me try to express what is generally said by those who have these difficulties:—Modern Science has unveiled to us rigid laws. We are told that the uniformity of Nature does not permit of any special interposition. To pray in case of sickness, or to pray in a stress of unfavourable weather—or, indeed, to pray for anything which implies an interference with the material world, is to ask for a violation of the Natural Order, and this Science pronounces to be impossible.

Let us examine these statements, and, as we

do this, let me remind you that one of our greatest living scientists—Sir Oliver Lodge—is constantly upbraiding Christians for needlessly impoverishing the scope of their communion with God. He tells us, again and again, that there is nothing that Science has yet revealed which need in the slightest degree narrow the scope of our communion with God. For all we know the Divine Government of the world may, for the testing of our faith, have left a real function for prayer to fulfil in any of the points here mentioned.

One of the great revelations of our age is the mighty force of Thought in the realm of matter. Therefore prayer in its petitionary aspect may be quite reasonable apart from any question of infringing law.

As Christians we acknowledge that our Father's response to our definite supplication is directly conditioned by His Divine arrangement of universal order.

And when from Christ, from our own conscience, or from the laws of God revealed in the material world, we have discovered what the Divine will is, then I think the only prayer we can reasonably make must be with the qualifi-

cation, "*Father, if it be possible, . . . all things are possible unto Thee ; nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt*": for there can be little doubt but that the ordinary laws of Nature are what God has willed, and it seems as unreasonable that we should want God to change His will as revealed in those laws as it is to pray that He should change His will as revealed in the Bible. Reasonable people can easily see the sense of this position ; for instance, it has been well said that no one thinks of praying that the sun may rise in the west instead of the east. Why? Not because we admit for one moment that it is impossible with God, but rather because long experience has clearly revealed His will in this matter.

But with this one qualification conceded, we must deny as blasphemous the idea that our heavenly Father is cramped and fettered by what we call invariable laws. It is an insult to intelligence to say that the Creator of all cannot so act upon the direction of forces as to cause things to happen or not to happen, in response to the prayer of faith, without any more upsetting the invariability of nature, than when you or I decide or not to lift a stone from the ground.

To my mind, prayer in its petitionary aspect is quite reasonable, altogether apart from any question of infringing law, because God can and does influence ourselves; the world of matter is not the whole world; there is a world of Mind and Soul, and just as the law of motion rules in the realm of Matter, so the law of prayer is revealed in the realm of Mind; and we may go further and say that, just as the life of earth is dependent upon the sun, so the soul of man is dependent upon communion with God. God may respect all His laws, and yet answer our prayers by influencing our consciences and hearts; and from this it also follows that God can answer many more prayers by influencing the conduct of our neighbours through their hearts and wills. And I am well assured that this intercession for others is very precious in God's eyes, for we are all members one of another in the great family of the Church.

Hence, Tennyson puts into the mouth of the dying king the noble words—

“More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If,—knowing GOD,—they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves, and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

To give up prayer because of intellectual perplexity, is to give up the only hold that we have got on the unseen world. "*Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief,*" may be a very illogical and self-contradictory petition; but it is psychologically possible, and we neglect at our peril the voice of Conscience which bids us pray.

Therefore I will conclude with a few words on the essentials of prayer.

The first requisite is *faith*: true prayer must be animated by faith; faith in the God to whom it is addressed, and faith that He will hear. Whatsoever things ye ask for, says our Lord, believe that ye have; rise from your knees in perfect assurance that if it be your Father's will you have received the gift you have prayed for.

Then our prayers must be uttered in *sincerity*: they must not be of the lips, but of the heart. We must go into the presence of God with the

thought of David when he said: "*Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me and examine my thoughts.*"

Again, they must be uttered in earnestness—"the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." If we want what we pray for our prayer must be earnest, it must be an effort, for prayer is the battlefield of life. Our Lord ever made His hours of prayer such, "*though He were a Son, yet made He supplications to God with strong crying and tears.*" And it was just because of this that before the eyes of men and through all the rest of His life's experience, He moved as one who was already more than conqueror.

And finally, it is our Father's will that we should pray.

God has chosen to give us the power; He has chosen to surround Himself with children possessed of will, intelligence, and affection: and even God Himself cannot force us into goodness. If we are good it can only be by making His commandments our aim. He can only make us good by raising us to His will, and so He teaches us to pray—to pray continually—to think with Him in solitude and in

society ; to see all things from His Divine standpoint.

He teaches us to bring, not only our faults and failings, but our wishes and plans, our ideals, our sorrows and our trials, above all, our hearts, so that all may be attuned to His own loving will.

Remember, we may be honest men ; we may be faithful friends, and yet come short by refusing to God the things that He longs for : the cry in every need, the sharing of every care, the aspiration in every perplexity.

Therefore, when fighting temptation, when bearing hardship, when disgusted with ourselves, let us be assured that the Divine power is near us, the purpose of the Father is around us—for the Elder Brother of the race has left us the never-dying consolation of His words, "*Be of good cheer ; I have overcome,*" and you shall overcome. "*Because I live, ye shall live also,*" and a life lived in this attitude, though it will perforce know dark moments, will yet be an ascending, a progressive life.

Therefore be not over-anxious about anything, "*but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be*

made known unto God. And the peace of God"
—that peace which comes of perfect freedom
from anxiety, perfect trust in a Father's love—
that peace "*shall keep your hearts and minds*
through Christ Jesus."

XI

LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE

*"My heart in chiming gladness o'er and o'er
Sings on 'God's everlasting love! What would'st Thou
more?'*

*Yes, one thing more! To know it ours indeed,
To add the conscious joy of full possession!"*

F. R. HAVERGAL.

*"Enjoy the present gift, nor wait to know
The unknowable. Enough to say, 'I feel
Love's sure effect, and being loved, must love
The LOVE, its cause, behind; I can, and do!'*

*Knowledge means
Ever-renewed assurance, by defeat
That victory is somehow still to reach—
But Love is victory—the prize itself!"*

BROWNING.

*"Knowledge!—not intuition—but the slow,
Uncertain fruit of an enhancing toil,
Strengthened by love."*

BROWNING.

XI

LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE

"This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge."—PHIL. i. 9.

S. PAUL in this epistle takes it for granted that *love* is to be the underlying element, the fundamental principle of all religion. The order of his ideas in the text before us is no mere rhetorical accident, for the appeal which Christianity makes is not to the head but to the heart ; not to the intellect, but to the affections. The first perception of the truth is not by the reason but by intuition. It is *ever with the heart that men believe unto righteousness*, for the true revelation of God must always be to the inward rather than to the outward eye.

If we carefully consider it, we must see that

any religion which sets forth, as Christianity does, to be a universal religion, must take up this position.

For humanity, we know, is not all equally endowed with the gifts of intellect and reason—and therefore a religion which depends for its essence on the intellect must go to the wall in the crush of daily life. The deepest and truest part of a man is not his reason but his heart. It is the heart and not the head which has built up the world of human relations; and so the greatest revelation of Christianity is summed up in the words "*God is love.*" Before this startling revelation the greatest philosophy of the world is foolishness; for surely to enwrap other men in the flame of a passionate love for right doing, is better than to analyse in the solitude of a study all the rival systems of ethical or social truth. These things have their proper place, but love comes first.

"The causes of belief," Mr. Balfour tells us,¹ "are not reasons." For while in other departments of thought one must know in order to love, in religion one must love in order to know. Thus while from the philosophic point

¹ "The Foundations of Belief."

of view the question, What is right conduct? precedes the question, How shall I do what is right? religion reverses the order of these questions. The will is first inspired, and then by following the Divine guidance one learns by degrees to know good and evil.

The intense love of Jesus our Lord in giving Himself to become Incarnate and to die for us, appeals to the common human heart more powerfully than anything else, for the philosophy of self-sacrifice is always intelligible. "*He loved me and gave Himself for me,*" is a reflection which ever bids love spring up in the Christian heart; and thus the "*Love of Christ*" generation after generation, "*constraineth us because we thus judge that if He died for all then were all dead, and He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him that died for them and rose again.*"

The love of Jesus Christ, then, is the fundamental thing in the life of a Christian. It is the common source of all that is most truly spiritual in religion and all that is most fruitful in philanthropy. But S. Paul would have this love to abound in knowledge, for there is a

period in the growth of love when knowledge is imperatively required; love cannot live for ever in a cell apart from thought and all the other influences of life.

No man, it has been said, can permanently keep his philosophy in one department of his mind and his devotion in another; and this being so, love sooner or later must come to a sort of understanding with thought in order to live.

Love must, from the necessity of the case, know something accurately about its object.

I am afraid it is a common opinion that "*faith*," and especially religious faith, necessitates a violent suppression of reason.

Some people think religion consists in professing to believe that which cannot be understood; whereas S. Paul says that *our love is to abound more and more in knowledge and in all discernment.*

The very purpose of God Incarnate was "to reveal"—to make plain what was before obscure, and our worship implies the use of reason, for the value of worship depends on the nature and character of that which is worshipped. The mere feeling of reverence

is not everything; that which is of first importance is the object upon which the feeling is bestowed.

S. Paul earnestly prays that the love of his Philippian converts may not evaporate into sentimentality. I would have you distinguish between sentiment, which is good, and sentimentality, which is bad; he would have them turn their power of sentiment into useful channels. *"This I pray that your love may abound more and more in knowledge."* So that they might *"be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ: being filled with the fruits of righteousness."*

Christ Himself told the woman of Samaria that the knowledge of the object worshipped was a special sign of a healthy spiritual state. Stupidity is not faith, neither is superstition religion. To assert that we believe what we have never taken the trouble to inquire whether we seriously believe or not, is not piety, but canting humbug. Persuading ourselves that we believe what we dare not investigate is sheer hypocrisy. These things will never prove to the world our regard and love for religion; rather do they show our

indifference to all truth.] That there are limitations to our human knowledge there can be no doubt. A God altogether known is as impossible a conception as a God altogether unknown.

Use our reason as we will, there must ever remain much that we cannot know, but I for one must for ever repudiate the teaching of those so-called philosophers who tell us that we are unable to recognise the existence of God by reason. I look within myself, and by examining the nature of my own capacity for thought I have a demonstration of the existence of God.

May I ask you to follow this argument carefully?

Thought or mind is the presupposition of everything. All that we know, even of that which we call matter, is really certain states of consciousness which it produces in us—so that without thought there could be nothing; but the thought which is the presupposition of all reality is not yours or mine or any other individual thinker's, for the world existed before we perceived it.

Our limited consciousness, therefore, implies

the existence of a consciousness that is unlimited; our infinite thoughts necessitate the existence of an infinite Thinker. The fact that we are only finite must prevent us from having a perfect knowledge of God, but the limitation of knowledge is no argument against the exercise of faith to help us at the point where reason fails—for faith implies a reasonable belief in the existence of God. It has been beautifully defined as “*Confidence manifested by conduct*,” or, as the Epistle to the Hebrews has it, it is *the blood of Christ*, that is, *the self-sacrifice of Christ*, which gives us boldness, for it is here that we have revealed the Love of God, and the fact that God does care for us and that He is not indifferent to our actions.

It is very doubtful whether any but the Christian is intellectually justified in ascribing to God the qualities which men do so unthinkingly. IS HE GOOD? Putting the revelation of Jesus aside, I think the answer is at least doubtful! Under the pressure of pain, and in the presence of “Nature’s immoralities,” one must doubt it; without any revelation, one must remain doubtful whether this world is

presided over by a good God or a devil God. I never knew a man who had any real personal interest in God who did not believe in the revelation of Jesus Christ with all his heart.

Here, then, we see that Faith involves far more than any mere assent. An intellectual faith by itself no more constitutes faith than the foundations alone constitute a building. The belief of the head must be supplemented by the confidence of the heart—and this confidence must be shown by conduct. There can be no mistake, therefore, as to whether we have faith or not, for Christ has given us the test: "*By their fruits ye shall know them.*"

How many really religious people think that they know absolutely everything until they begin to use their reason! How often they are tempted while in this childlike state to think that the intellectual difficulties of other people are capable of being easily explained, but when they begin "*to add to their love knowledge,*" when they begin "*to test the things that differ,*" then they discover that they know scarcely anything, and, in

the words of Tennyson, they individually exclaim—

“I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world’s altar stairs,
That slope thro’ darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.”

The beginning of all knowledge is *self-knowledge*, and until we understand our own limitations real knowledge cannot begin. Then having the manifestation of the love of God in our hearts, the conviction that we are “*called to be sons of God*”—we begin to realise the deeper love of God manifested in the education of the Holy Spirit whose office it is to lead us into all truth.

Our knowledge of God depends upon our capacity to receive that knowledge. Human life is a school, and knowledge grows step by step. To-day’s lesson can only be learned to-day.

Maybe some have known and felt Christ

very near within the little range of their own personal interests, according to their narrow vision, and then when wider views have been opened out to them, they lose, or rather think for a moment that they lose, His Sacred Presence, and so they are filled with distress. But if this is your case, take heart ; a season of anguish is the condition of new life ; all progress, as Bishop Westcott says, must be through loss. Your lower selfish ideal has only been obscured that you may go on and grasp the "Christ that is to be." His parting words, "*Lo I am with you alway*," are still true. His Holy Spirit does still teach and guide us into larger visions of the truth.

"God's greatness rolls around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest."

Surely this should give us confidence to go on bravely in the path of faith, until in the day of Christ *we come to the measure of the stature of the perfect man*. Let us then be filled with the knowledge of His will until *we know even as we are also known*.

Therefore—

“Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
We mock thee when we do not fear ;
But help thy foolish ones to bear,
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy Light.”

“And in thy wisdom make me wise.”

*“Thus I pray that your love may abound yet
more and more in knowledge.”*

XII

PROGRESS IN THE TRUTH

*"Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by
and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heaven within the
human eye,
Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human
soul;
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the
whole."*

TENNYSON.

*"Let us then be what we are, and speak what we
think, and in all things
Keep ourselves loyal to Truth!"*

LONGFELLOW.

*"There is no freedom and no peace
Except in making progress true,
And every new stage will increase
His grace to you.*

*Forward! to learn the higher truth
Through harder tasks of duty done,
What though the way be rough or smooth
If life be won?"*

WALTER C. SMITH.

XII

PROGRESS IN THE TRUTH

"The Spirit of truth . . . he will guide you into all truth."—JOHN xvi. 13.

WHEN the Delphic oracle decided that Socrates was the wisest man in Greece, the philosopher was much puzzled, for he was painfully conscious that he was not really wise. It was only after careful consideration that he found wherein his wisdom consisted. It was just this—that while, in common with other men, he knew very little, yet he recognised his ignorance, while they prided themselves on their knowledge.

The pity to-day is, that those of us who have got so far as to feel our own ignorance and our own limitations are so miserably lukewarm in our pursuit of truth. For this power

of seeking for truth is one of the grandest of human prerogatives ; it is the highest privilege of a Christian "*To be numbered amongst the fellow-workers with the truth*"; nay, it is one of the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit of Grace Himself.

The Spirit of "understanding," or "intelligence," is God's Spirit working in capable men, to enlarge the measure and the fulness of their capacity ; from a human standpoint we may say that it is man's spirit being attracted ever nearer to the All-wise and All-knowing Father Spirit.

The world's question, now as ever, is the question of "jesting Pilate"—What is truth? And the answer is not easy.

I suppose we may best define it as a knowledge of facts. The old word "trow" is derived from a Sanscrit root, signifying something "fixed" or "firm." We often find people making distinctions between "facts" and "truth." This is unnecessary, for all facts are realities, and truth comprehends everything that is real.

Christianity, as an historical religion, rests upon facts which do not change, though

different aspects of the faith may come more or less into prominence at different periods. Yet our text, and many suchlike utterances of the Saviour, constitutes a pledge that the Spirit of Truth will co-operate in the gradual education of Christendom in all truth. We must remember that the whole of the religious belief held at any one time is made up of permanent as well as of variable elements, and the change in the latter does not necessitate any change in the former. We have only to look into a volume of old sermons to feel that the formulæ in which one generation states its religious ideas utterly fail to satisfy another. For to each generation the promise is fulfilled, "*He will guide you into all truth.*"

To-day as we look back over the past we see that the history of the Church, like the history of man, has been a history of experiences. God has constantly been saying new things to the world as the years unfold. God has spoken by the sequence of events which His Providence ordains. We may if we will see how God taught lessons of order to the England of the Heptarchy, lessons of patience and hope to the England of the Normans, lessons of stead-

fastness to the England of the Stuarts, lessons of seriousness and reality to the England of the Georges, while in our own day He is showing many things, both stern and tender, in the stirring events amidst which we are living.

Under the guidance of the Spirit, the Church of to-day is enabled to enter more completely into the message she is privileged to proclaim. During this age we have seen the Spirit of God lead us into those broad fields of speculation where once we thought it unsafe to tread. We have seen the books of criticism opened and examined freely. We have seen those things which once seemed essential to Christianity proved to be only incidental. We are beginning to see how absolutely simple essential Christianity is ; and we are studying more and more the life and words of Christ, and finding in them the fount of all truth.

When Christ said, "*I am the Truth*," He meant at least that there is a Truth behind the things we see, that there is a fixed order, purpose, and unity which bind the world together ; and that this Truth received its highest expression in a Person.

That Power which everywhere is working as

the hidden cause and energy of all things is also one who can claim to receive the fellowship of the human mind.

In the Person of Christ is offered the answer to all the problems which perplex humanity. Philosophy has ever sought a unifying principle of knowledge, a central fact, and in Christ the dream of the philosopher finds its realisation, for in Him "*are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (Col. ii. 3); and He, the Supreme Truth, has commissioned us to claim the whole world in His name.

The most precious truths are always those which are hardest to learn, those which every day's experience fills with a larger meaning; as yet we are only beginning to interpret our charter of inheritance. "Truth," says Milton, "is compared in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of tradition." And we know there is nothing so stolid or so immovable as opinions that have lived too long. Truth is ever passing out of living doctrine into dead dogma, but again, with a certain conservation of moral force, through the power of the life-giving Spirit, it

is always passing back through re-statement out of dead dogma into living force.

Now while no generation of Christians can confirm without arrogance that it holds the whole or even the best truth, yet if we really possess the Spirit of Christ we must reverently expect that He will lead us into all truth, while being fully conscious that there will be others hereafter for whom we of to-day are yet unprepared.

We cannot for one moment suppose that Christ—the Eternal Word—has as yet said His last word to Christendom. Hence we should rejoice in rather than bewail what are called “our unhappy divisions,” for in them we may recognise the numerous advantages which every different school of thought contributes towards the general spread of those Eternal principles of Truth in which, as Christians, we are all interested; in fact the very differences which seem to separate us are largely due to the manifoldness and vitality of the revelation which we all accept.

To-day one of the hardest things for the Church to grasp and learn is belief in her own inspiration. We find it difficult to think

that our contemporaries possess a spiritual insight and power of doctrinal statement equal, nay, rather superior, to that of the men who drew up creeds at Nicæa, or Arles, or Westminster. The temptation is ever to glorify a past time which, for those who were in it, must have seemed as dull and commonplace as does our own time to us. Nevertheless, the gift of the Holy Spirit has never been withdrawn from the Church, and if we fail to recognise its presence, or to estimate its true significance, we shut our eyes to the brightest privilege of our high calling. If we once give way to the thought that our God is more the God of the past than He is of the present, we open the gate to blackest despair, for, as Dr. Martineau truly says, "complete unbelief is attained when God is driven out of the past as we have driven Him out of the present"; but he adds, "complete belief is reached when God is made to fill the present as much as piety causes Him to fill the past." These are deep words: let us think for one moment what they involve. It is to have the courage to say that if God is not here in London, He never was in Jerusalem of old; that if He does not speak to-day by His

gifted prophets, He had nothing to say to the prophets of old, neither to Moses nor Samuel, David nor Isaiah, nor any of the others.

I am convinced that this is emphatically the truth to be grasped in the present day ; for the most fatal thing that can befall us, as individuals or a Church, is to doubt the spiritual capacity of our own generation. What the Church did in the third century, in the fourth century, and the sixteenth century, she can do again to-day ; that re-statement of religious truth which took place in these past ages will take place again. And when "*the fulness of time*" comes for this we may as certainly expect the guidance of the Holy Spirit, even as it was given to them of old.

Nothing short of this belief can give us courage to investigate the truth in science or history or revelation. No other conception of Christianity is so profoundly Christian, for it emphasises our absolute trust in Him who is the Truth and our abiding belief in the work of His Holy Spirit.

"How much more hearty," says the late Bishop Lightfoot,¹ "would be the sympathy

¹ "Epistle to Colossians Com."

of theologians with the revelations of science and the developments of history, if they habitually connected them with the operation of the same Divine Word who is the centre of all their religious aspirations. Through the recognition of this idea, with all the consequences which flow from it as a living influence, more than in any other way, may we hope to strike the chords of that 'vaster music' which results only from the harmony of knowledge and faith, of reverence and research."

We in our age must fearlessly take the love of truth as our guide, and we shall find that out of the principles of scientific discovery the principles of historical criticism, and the principles generally of an enlightened intelligence, recognising alike the facts of the physical and the spiritual world, there will spring up necessarily the Church of the future, the new and living branch of the Christian Church,

We are the custodians of this priceless gift, "the Spirit of Truth," who is ever seeking to lead us into higher, clearer knowledge of eternal truth. Let us therefore make more of this revelation of our Faith; it is a shame upon our Christianity that our thoughts of our Master are so narrow and provincial.

May I ask what is our individual attitude towards this Divine Spirit? Are we resisting or progressing? There is a party in our Church which holds that the Church is already in possession of all the truth she needs. On principle they are opposed to theological progress; tradition rather than truth is their watchword, and anything new is at once dismissed with the epigram, "The true part is not new, and the new part is not true." Having been, as they believe, providentially preserved from the possibility of error, it is quite needless for them to test the accuracy of their opinions. We all know that truth is the name some good people give to their prejudices; and there is a good deal of ignorance and stupidity in the world which, alas! is sometimes dignified by the name of faith.

God has never revealed truth to men in such a way that they could not reject it if they would. He gives us opportunities for arriving at truth, but He never forces us to take advantage of them; and those who, in the vain attempt to rid themselves of individual responsibility cling to the broken reed of authority, sacrifice their birthright of Christian freedom.

"Ye shall know the truth," says Christ, *"and the truth shall make you free,"* for *"where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."*

God grant that we Englishmen may never be ashamed of the boast of our Reformed Church, that our faith is not afraid to reason, nor is our reason ashamed to adore. Let us therefore—

“Learn the mystery of Progression duly,
Do not call each glorious change decay,
But know we only hold our treasures truly
When it seems as if they passed away.”

In conclusion, let me commend the strong words of the late Bishop Phillips Brooks, who thoroughly grasped the needs of the age.

“Our faith can suffer and grow pale only if we shut it out from the increasing light, and fancy it will abide in darkness. The clear shining of knowledge may dissipate a thousand fancies which we have mistaken for realities; but it shall bring to faith health and vigour and new life. While many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased, Christianity cannot be preserved as a cloistered virtue or a scholastic

art; but out in the breezy world, under the open sky, rejoicing in the light, its strength shall not be abated nor its eye grow dim. Reverentially and humbly, but nothing doubting, the Christian of our day may follow whatever new paths of knowledge seem opening to his approach; and though he go down into the depths, or wander through realms of strange shadows and endless confusions, nevertheless, if he remains true to the Spirit sent for his guidance, he shall find himself walking in a cloud of light, full of all melodious voices."

We Christians, therefore, can have no fear of Truth; we may follow it wherever it will lead, knowing that it cannot lead us from Him who is the Truth itself.

All down through the ages God's quickening voice may be heard, in the beautiful things that have been disclosed by literature and by art, in the wonderful things which have been brought to light by physical and philosophic research; at every turn, at every point, we meet the living God. Thy truth, O most mighty Lord, is around us on every side. It is Thy Spirit which has been building up our manifold civilisation, developing and multi-

plying our industries, increasing our knowledge, and quickening our activities. Therefore, while giving God the thanks, let us "*stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*" (Gal. v. 1). We need not fear that we are the victims of the prejudices of our day, or the slaves of the Time Spirit, for we know that in Christ we have the truth, and that His Spirit will guide us into All Truth.

XIII

THE GOSPEL OF SONSHIP

*"We are filled
Who live to-day, with a more present sense
Of the great love of GOD, than those of old
Who, groping in the dawn of Knowledge, saw
Only dark shadows of the Unknown."*

L. MORRIS.

*"Are we not Princes? we who stand
As heirs beside the Throne;
We who can call the Promised Land
Our Heritage, our own;
And answer to no less command
Than GOD's, and His alone?"*

*O GOD, that we can dare to fail
And dare to say we must!
O GOD, that we can ever trail
Such banners in the dust,
Can let such starry honours pale
And such a blazon rust!*

*Shall we upon such titles bring
The taint of sin and shame?
Shall we, the children of the King
Who hold so grand a claim,
Tarnish by any meaner thing
The glory of our name?"*

A. PROCTER.

*"It remains, if thou, the image of GOD,
Wilt reason well, that thou shalt know His ways.
But first thou must be loyal!—Love, O man,
Thy Father—hearken when HE pleads with thee!
For there is something left of HIM e'en now,—
A witness for thy Father in thy soul,
Albeit thy better state thou hast foregone."*

J. INGELOW.

XIII

THE GOSPEL OF SONSHIP

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."—JOHN i. 12.

IN one of the grandest works of the world's literature, Socrates is described by Plato as gradually building up for his disciples the Conception of a perfect kingdom. He fears that it is hardly to be realised upon earth, but he thinks that maybe there is a pattern of it laid up somewhere in the heavens, in which kings are to be philosophers and philosophers kings.

In this magnificent conception he pictures for his disciples a state in which wisdom, temperance, and justice are to reign supreme, and in which each citizen is to devote himself chiefly to perfecting his own moral character ; but at

this point a disciple breaks the sage's line of thought with the question, If the Citizen's life is to be entirely turned towards his own personal perfection, he will not, of course, engage in Politics? "No," replies Socrates, "certainly he will not, *unless some Divine event befall!*"

Now it is just because we believe that this Divine event, for which the great Greek teacher so wistfully seemed to long, has befallen, that I would ask you to test your lives by this Divine character manifested in human flesh and to judge each for himself, how far individually he has apprehended the fulness and the significance of that character, remembering that our perfect ideal exists already.

Our citizenship—the type of every social privilege, the pattern of every duty—is laid up in heaven, and our calling is higher than the royalty of the philosopher or king, for "*as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.*"

To make men feel the love of God as He felt it, and to do the will of God as He did it—this surely was the supreme object of Christ's

revelation to the world—and the experience of all Christians confirms this majestic claim.

It would be unprofitable to speculate how near the saints of God have attained to Christ's ideal, but this is certain, that the nearer they have reached it, the more fully have they attained it through Christ and what He has taught.

In these days it is being specially claimed for our Church and her best leaders that they are bringing home to men's consciences the Christ that is and is to be—they are indicating the supremacy of Jesus Christ, as Lord over every part and province of human life.

It is a noble aim. To bear such a mission is to preach the Gospel of a generous discontent.

It is to say to at least half the world that the Christ they have apprehended is no longer the King of Men, for "the Christ that is to be" has yet to be remoulded within the hearts of men.

It is difficult work, for many will persist in opposing, in the name of the Christ of the past, the Christ that is being revealed in the present.

We must remember that slowly and pain-

fully through long ages, out of the misconceptions and strivings of successive generations, in spite of many mistakes and failures, the revelation of Christ is surely emerging. In the Middle Ages it was the Crucified Man of Sorrows that was worshipped. To-day it is the strong-souled, all-conquering, Imperial Jesus that is being revealed. It is now generally admitted that the Gospel records give us portraits rather than strictly historical biographies of Jesus.

Each writer has written with a purpose, he has wished to uphold a certain ideal, a certain character of the Christ. The personality of the Saviour we can see has passed through the reflecting medium of the mind of the disciple; even to-day the tendency is for each one to idealise his own Christ—which surely is the great proof that for us Christians Christ is only another name for God; and since we have begun to grasp something of the life manifested in Jesus, we can worship no other God but one, that is Christ, who revealed to us *power to become Sons of God*.

Only let us never forget that each age sees in that Divine character the answer to its own

wants and needs, the key to its own aspirations, but no age sees it as it really is.

If we once grasp this fact we shall be able to gaze unmoved at the storms which seem to threaten our Church. We shall be able to *rejoice in the Lord*, and at the same time *let our moderation*—our toleration and reasonableness—*be known unto all men*. We shall understand how, through such apparent antagonisms as the revival of learning in the thirteenth century, the Reformation in the sixteenth, the rise of Rationalism in the eighteenth, and other movements in the nearer past, not only have false likenesses of Christ been taken away, but also other phases of His character have been brought to light which were unrealised in previous history. Nay, we shall mark how each mistake that men have made about Christ's religion has in some way or other brought out Christ Himself more clearly.

For the glory of our Lord is ever being revealed by great reactions against false systems—reactions which do not merely destroy false conceptions, but which also popularise and make intelligible true conceptions of Him. Yet even these conceptions, relatively true as

they are, constantly need revising—for as each soul mounts higher up the hill of truth, the ever-broadening view discloses the fact that the Christ of childhood exists no longer, and that shining out on the higher ridges is the dawn of the Christ that is to be.

Often amid some inward struggle our soul's question has been, "Has the Christ as we know Him sufficed?" and frequently the answer comes, "No! for in our case we feel He has not fulfilled Himself." Then the wrong is in Him or in our demand—either we seek what no true Christ can embody, our expectancy is either morally or mentally at fault, or He, as we have known him, no longer suffices for our needs. He is yet to reveal Himself in broader light, and is waiting for us to receive Him; for the former state of things there is no remedy but excision; the latter means a growth from strength to strength.

For the real purpose of life for each one of us is progress and development. This is a fact which has been too often overlooked by Christians—our Church has often appeared to maintain the doctrine that our only duty in the world was to prepare to get out of it—that we

had nothing of any importance to do upon earth except to prepare for heaven. Now, wherever this doctrine came from, of one thing we can be certain, namely, that it never came from Christ.

His revelation is a revelation of a life. Alas! that the Christianity of Christendom should have resolved itself into "*believing*" instead of "*doing*."

We are invited to believe, in order that we may live the belief—and our faith, whatever it may be, is only valuable in so far as it affects our life for good. As it has been well expressed "the only value of believing is in the living the believing."

"Our Lord's best interpreters
Are faithful human souls;
The gospel of a life like theirs
Is more than creed or scrolls."

The life of Jesus is open for each one of us to copy; we see it portrayed in the Gospel records; there it is set forth as the light and life of all men.

The very fact of the Ascent of Man which evolution declares, demands as its complement

a descent from above, an imparting of a higher life—and this life of Christ is continually descending from the higher spiritual world to lift us up to the dignity of Sons of God. May I not say that it is manifest to-day in human life? Do we not see Christ and know Him in many a noble, self-denying life among us? In the lives of those men and women who devote themselves to the service of their fellows—in the lives of those who are ever sacrificing their own selfish ease, and offering all their gifts and energies for the welfare of the many? This is one side of the picture; there is another side, for there is a strange perversity in human nature which inclines us to do exactly the opposite of what we ought. There is a selfish animalism which is perfectly satisfied with its vulgar ease—which cares nothing about possessing a more enlightened mind, a more sympathetic heart, or a more noble character. Nay, so hidebound are some of these people that the keenest sarcasm falls off them as water from a duck's back. Their little stock of notions they regard as a complete system of philosophy, and they pity or despise every one who does not possess

the same intellectual treasures. Nothing gives a true Christian more disheartenment than to think of the masses of impassive, contented Christians who, frightened by the rumours of hell fire, fly to Christ to avoid the flames, but not to have their sins purged away—not to grow in grace and truth. It is difficult to imagine the painful discipline and training such people will have to pass through in the fiery furnace of God's purifying love before they awake to the real issues of life, and look to Christ, the great example.

It was no idle dream of Plato's when he pronounced that the future well-being of humanity depended upon the possession of knowledge by men who would regard it not merely as a priceless enjoyment for themselves, but as an equipment for the highest tasks in the service of their fellow-men. Even to-day the whole creation groaneth and "*waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God*"—waiteth for men who in the senate, in the office, and in the highways, will ennoble and dignify life by courageously labouring to make impossible the conditions which are now turning God's world into a hell for millions.

To-day it is of vital importance that we Christians should vindicate our belief in deeds—and so prepare and hasten the coming of the Lord; we recognise the opportunity of the Christlike life in the work of the clergyman, the doctor, the nurse, or the philanthropist, but we fail when it comes to vindicating our Master in the office, the counting-house, the factory, or the Stock Exchange. The daily work of the great mass of our people has yet to be Christianised—even our cultivated Christians have not yet realised that there is a service which they might render to their fellows, for Christ's sake, in our Borough and County Governments, our School Boards, and as the Guardians of our poor; in such work there is as much opportunity for the exercise of the highest gifts as would be called forth by a seat in Parliament or a place in the Cabinet—nay, may we not say that the very amusements of our poor would gain if cultivated people would give more of their time in helping to amuse them rationally? There is a charm about this work which is superior to many of the entertainments of so-called Society.

It is well to remind ourselves that for the

Christian the enjoyment of all good things must be sanctified by being in some way or other shared with others—true sacrifice is not self-denial nor self-mortification, but communion, the sharing in common fellowship; and as we give we shall receive, as we yield our personal life of ease and comfort in service, a larger, fuller life will flow into us, our souls will be expanded, the life of Christ will be manifested in our lives, we shall become Sons of God—saviours of our fellow-men.

XIV

ATONEMENT

*"When He bowed down His Head in the death-hour
Solemnised Love His triumph! The sacrifice then was
completed.
Lo! then was rent on a sudden the veil of the temple,
dividing
Earth and heaven apart, and the dead from the
sepulchres rising,
Whispered with pallid lips and low in the ears of each
other
Th' answer but dreamed of before to Creation's enigma
—Atonement!
Depths of Love are Atonement's depths, for Love is
Atonement!"*

LONGFELLOW.

*"But all through life I see a Cross,
Where Sons of God yield up their breath:
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death;
There is no vision but by Faith,
Nor glory but by bearing shame,
Nor justice but by taking blame."*

"Olig Grange," W. C. SMITH.

XIV

ATONEMENT

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."
—2 COR. V. 19.

THERE is no subject so surrounded with difficulty or so fruitful in misrepresentation as the Atonement. No subject more demands reverence and modesty, together with the profound conviction that "*now we see but through a glass darkly . . . now we know but in part.*"

The word Atonement is synonymous with reconciliation. It means according to the accepted etymology at-one-ment: the bringing to an understanding those who have misunderstood one another.

In the New Testament, the Cross of Christ is put before us in three ways—as a sacrifice

for sin, as a revelation of God, and as a motive power. The most difficult side of this doctrine is unquestionably the first.

I. Men are constantly invited to trust in the propitiation offered once and for all by Christ.

This sacrificial view has taken a great hold on the English mind, so much so that it is the only aspect insisted on by a large section of our Church and by the great body of Nonconformists. Hence, it behoves us to understand very clearly what we mean by it.

Of the two most important points in this view, all professing Christians are agreed, first, that for all men in this world a reconciliation of man to God is needed ; and secondly, that this has been effected for all in the person of Jesus Christ.

That man in his natural condition is not at one with God, every one feels whose higher life has been so far quickened as to discern what is good. Such feeling is the beginning of religion in the mind, and may arise independent of revelation ; yet it can only find its full satisfaction in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Sin is the non-fulfilment of the Divine purpose ; man, we know, has the power of choice,

whether he will obey the animal or the spiritual instinct. As a matter of fact, he listens sometimes to the one voice, sometimes to the other ; and so he is never without sin. For God's will is, that we should always choose the highest. The man who to-day asserted that he had never committed a sin would be regarded by universal consent as the greatest of self-deceivers. Our human nature has been often compared to a battlefield of opposing principles, in which even where the better prevails, the worse has often won its partial successes, and the victor is more or less crippled.

Jesus Christ stands before us in the Gospels as the representative of man and the manifestation of God. "*The First-born among many brethren,*" He explains man to Himself and He reveals God to man. We believe that God and humanity have been at one in the Person of Jesus Christ, and that in Him we have the Archetypal specimen of the destiny of humanity.

The doctrine of Atonement by blood, the idea that Christ suffered as a victim offered to God, on the altar of the Cross, is no part of the Christian religion ; such a thought

belongs to the most corrupt form of the old Paganism. Our fundamental belief in the essential oneness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit makes such a doctrine impossible.

Let us therefore inquire, What significance the New Testament attaches to the death of Christ?

I find nothing which teaches me that Christ's death was the sacrifice of a victim to appease God's anger, or to change His disposition towards man. I find nothing which teaches me that the suffering of Christ was punishment, inflicted by an angry God on the innocent, in substitution for that of the guilty.

The one word of Christ, which sums up all that has ever been said about the virtue of His death as a sacrifice for sin, is that recorded after the ambitious request of the mother of James and John, that her sons might sit on the right and left of the Saviour in glory, when He says, "*the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" The word *ransom* here is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew *copher*, which means "an expiation," a word which carries with it no idea of compensation to any

one, but rather that of satisfaction of the Divine law.

Space forbids our tracing out, through the absorbing history of the world's faiths, the gradual transformation of the old sacrificial idea into the modern propitiatory conception ; suffice it to say that in the earliest age sacrifice is conceived of as a feast, in which the Eternal, the friend of man, becomes the guest of man. The old offering of bread and wine, partly consumed by the sacrificer and his fellow-men, partly ascending by combustion, was a symbol of human life blending with the Divine.

Even in later times, when the purity and simplicity of the old idea was lost, the Jewish sacrifices were distinguished from the sacrifices of heathendom by the fact that there existed among the Jews a "Mercy Seat," which was a constant witness to them that they had no need to extort mercy from God as from a grudging, vindictive Deity. The Jewish sacrifices were intended to typify self-surrender ; they were symbolical of a determination to serve the God of righteousness.

All down the ages, prophet after prophet

raised his voice against the materialistic idea of sacrifice. The protests culminate in the words of Hosea, "*I will have mercy and not sacrifice,*" and in the words of Micah, "*What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?*" and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews echoes their thoughts when he asserts that the only sacrifice demanded by God is a yielded will and a broken spirit. Listen to his words, "*It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world (that is, Jesus) he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. . . . Then said I, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first (that is the old conception of propitiatory sacrifice) that he may establish the second (that is, filial obedience to the will of God), by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*"

Thus Christ, as the representative of the whole human race, at-one-ed the imperfect human will to the perfect universal Divine will, and as Archdeacon Wilberforce so ably expresses it, "through the organic spiritual unity

of the body of humanity, all humanity is virtually at-one-ed to God through the attained perfection of one member of the race." Thus demonstrating to us that the only sacrifice man can offer to God is his own self-dedication, in union with the one perfect Son.

For the inmost life, the true being, in every one, is the Divine nature, and its appointed work is to unloose the human soul from sinful tendencies; the Divine redeeming germ in man at-one-ing the human and the Divine.

Atonement, therefore, is not a single isolated act, but a maintained attitude of spiritual evolution in every member of the race.

The sacrifice of Christ is that "*He was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.*" We may well believe that the death of Christ, regarded in itself as the evidence of the malice and wickedness of men, was altogether hateful to God; that which was pleasing to Him was the entire willingness of Jesus to suffer and give Himself even to death, since by death alone could He be true to God and true to man.

Further, it must never be forgotten that the Atonement was not merely a single episode in

our Lord's life. It began at the manger of Bethlehem, it was wrought in the daily life at Nazareth, by the shores of the Galilean lake, in the busy haunts of Jerusalem, as well as in the solitude of the hills and deserts. It was not only the "dying of a death," but also the "living of a life." Yet, as Dr. Bonney says, "Needs must that He, our elder brother, should die, because until death writes the closing page of each man's history, life's opportunities are not exhausted. . . Needs must that He should die : for if not, there would have been one trial through which He would not have passed, so that it could not have been said, 'one of ourselves has borne all, suffered all, and triumphed over all.'"

The Bible never talks of propitiating God—what it does talk of is propitiating, that is showing mercy to the sinner, and propitiating, doing away with the evil of sin.

We proceed to inquire in what way we may be said to be saved from the power of sin by His death. In what way can that death be said to be a means of producing life in us?

The principle is a very obvious one to him who reflects. Plato, in his famous dialogue on

the immortality of the soul, has given expression to the truth. He points out how, in the visible world, we see everywhere life tending to death, and death at work producing life. S. Paul reminds us how it is only by the death of the seed that the life of the plant is produced.

The processes by which food becomes nourishment are further instances of the same truth. Before the food can support our life, it is necessary that the life principle in it should be destroyed.

And as it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual life. S. Paul cries, "*I am crucified with Christ, and yet I live.*" He tells his Corinthian converts that the death that works in him becomes life in them; how he "*bears about in his body the dying*" or the putting to death "*of the Lord Jesus*" in order that the life also of Jesus may be "*manifest in his mortal flesh.*" "*He died for us,*" we are told, "*that we should live together with Him.*"

And this is the true law of the life of the redeemed. First, we must die with Christ, and then we must live with Him. First, the crucifixion—the putting to a lingering death of all our evil and corrupt affections, and then the

rising again to life by reason of our conquest over them. First, the slaying of self in the readiness to follow Christ in His sufferings for others—the willingness to hold not even our lives dear unto ourselves should the welfare of others demand that we should sacrifice them, and then the following of Jesus in His sanctified and glorified life—a life in which the dross of sin is purged away, and the refined metal glows with brightness when permeated with the fire of the Spirit of Love. Thus the Atonement once made for us is wrought out in us, the mind once at war with God is now at peace with Him ; our wills, once too exclusively and perversely ours, are now one with His.

The glad news of the Gospel is that “*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself,*” teaching men that they had greatly erred in supposing that He was indifferent to human welfare, or vindictive in regard to human sin, that He would not reckon against us our trespasses, any more than a good physician imputes to his patients the wounds and bruises of their diseased bodies.

Christ died as He lived, “*the just for the unjust,*” not to bring God to us, for God’s love to

man is ever independent of man's love to God, but "*to bring us to God.*" Calvary was, therefore, a sacrifice which God provided, in order that He might be more fully revealed. God is for ever and always reconciled to us, and "*We are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*"

II. The Cross of Christ reveals the love of God. The root fault of all the religions that preceded Christianity was that they did not believe that God loved men; they thought of Him as an offended and austere Being, who needed to be appeased by gifts and sacrifice before He would be gracious to them. Therefore, Christ came to teach them, that God would Himself make the sacrifice which they had thought He was bent on demanding; He came to assure them that His love for them had never ceased, and would never loosen its hold.

The love of God is ever the same, but it is impossible for Him to love evil, and so the necessity of salvation lies in the deliverance from that which is no real part of our true being. As it has been well expressed, "A

mother is not out of harmony with her child because it has fallen into the mire and become dirty; but the child is out of harmony with itself and with all that is clean until it has been washed and re-dressed; its fall has altered its condition, but not its relation and inherent nature." And so in spiritual things, the lost sheep ever remains kindred to the Lamb of God; the fine gold may become dim, or be mingled with dross, yet there is no loss or change of inherent quality.

And so the Cross tells of a love with which there is no time. It is a token of God's sacrifice to win back our allegiance to Him. It is a witness of the depth of Divine love: "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" As the Jews of old were reminded by the "Mercy Seat" that God was more willing to give than they to receive, so Christ is a propitiation, a "Mercy Seat," from which God reveals Himself as a God of love—"The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It is true, as Sir Oliver Lodge says, "The genuineness of Divine suffering, no matter how inevitable, has always been recognised as a revelation of Divine and

Fatherly love. The redeeming and elevating efficacy of such a conviction is manifest. The perception of something in the Universe which not only makes for righteousness, but which loves and sympathises in the process, and yet is no mere indiscriminate charity, weakly relieving man from the consequences of his blunders or stealthily undermining his powers of self-help, but a true benevolence, which healthily and strongly, and if need be sternly convinces him that the path of duty is the path of joy, that sacrifice and not selfishness is the road to the heights of existence, that it is far better to suffer wrong than to do wrong: such a perception inevitably raises man far above 'the yelp of the beast,' 'saves' him, saves him truly, from æons of degradation, and enables him to 'stand on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher.' "

Redemption was no after-thought of God's, called into play because of man's misuse of his God-given faculties; it was the pre-determined operation of the Eternal Father, whence we came forth, before the world was.

The love thus once manifested on Calvary

still exists, and this is our hope for all who leave this world in ignorance of their true life, for all who miss the right path, little as we know about the present state of our beloved dead; of one thing we can be certain, that nothing is impossible which the love of God can do. Where love is supreme, where love directs the resources of intelligence, love must overcome all things, even the sin of the world, and the hardness of men's hearts, for "*love never faileth.*"

"The love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

But we make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own,
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own."

Love as pure, as deep, and as self-sacrificing as that manifested on Calvary is ever in God, and is in all ways and at all times ready to manifest itself to His creatures.

But even this aspect of the Atonement has its characteristic dangers.

Just as those who think of Christ's Cross only as a deliverance may say, "He has paid the penalty, and I take the reward," and sink into an immoral selfishness, so those who think of the Cross only as a manifestation of the love of God may come to rely on that love without any attempt to respond to its claims.

III. Therefore we must speak of the Cross not only as a Sacrifice and a Revelation, but also as a motive power; and here we understand it most easily. To quicken love within us, to make us glow with responsive emotion, this is the moral effect of the Cross of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ breaks the power of sin, it heals its wounds, and washes away its stains by inspiring within man a responsive love. All the passages in the New Testament about "washing away sin" and "cleansing by the blood of Christ" become unintelligible if we lose sight of this third aspect of the Cross; blood, we all know, does not cleanse literally, it defiles and stains. To wash a man in blood is not to cleanse him, but to make him foul; but when we understand that the blood stands for the life freely given, that the sacrifice of

Christ manifests the love of God, then that love kindles a responsive love in our hearts, which is as a fountain to cleanse from the stains of sin.¹

And, in conclusion, remember "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps." His great sacrifice must be the motive-power of all our self-sacrifices.

It is impossible to speak of the many fallacies which lurk in the common mind about self-sacrifice; suffice it to say that the burdens which some people impose upon themselves are not the real burdens: too often they are only devices to get rid of God's burdens. True

¹ Cf. *Hibbert Journal*, vol. ii., page 802. "In truth the whole of this language about blood conveys the idea not of a life imputed but of a life imparted.

"Oh, wash me in Thy precious blood."

That cannot mean, impute to me a righteousness that I do not possess; it can only mean, communicate to me a righteousness that I cannot attain to alone. It is the cry for spiritual emancipation, for the lifting of life out of its squalor and meanness. It is not the cowardly appeal to be excused for wrong-doing in virtue of the sacrifice of another, but the request to be enabled to achieve truly the purpose of life, here or hereafter, by the gradual process of uplifting that comes through union with the Divine."

sacrifice, we have seen, is not self-denial nor self-mortification, but a "sharing" with others, which implies unselfishness.

The spirit that was in the old martyrs must be in us, or we are unworthy of our Christian name. The spirit which led them to count their lives as nothing, to rejoice in that they were counted worthy to suffer with Jesus, should inspire us to sacrifice ourselves for Him in life.

It should be our greatest joy to take up the Cross and follow Him whithersoever He goeth; and unless we have a sincere desire to do this, our Christian profession is nothing short of blasphemy.

"What do ye more than others?" It is a crucial question! Many so-called Christians are, I fear, in reality narrower in their sympathies, more selfish in their actions, and less liberal in their thoughts than many who have not enrolled themselves under the glorious Name.

If your hearts have never been touched by the old, old story of the Cross, if you honestly see no beauty in that life of self-sacrifice, if you are determined to make no sacrifice for your

fellow-men, for whom Christ died, then, for God's sake, give up calling yourselves Christians! Why must you bring the name of Christ into contempt?

Why crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame?

“Could we but crush that ever-craving lust
 For bliss, which kills all bliss, and lose our Life,—
 Our barren unit-life—to find again
 A thousand Lives in those for whom we die—
 So, were we men and women! and should hold
 Our rightful rank in God's great Universe,
 Wherein, in heaven and earth, by will or nature
 Nought lives for Self!—
 All, all,—from crown to footstool,—
 The Lamb, before the world's foundations slain—
 The Angels, ministers to God's elect,
 The sun, who only shines to light a world,
 The clouds, whose glory is to die in showers,
 The fleeting streams, who in their ocean-graves
 Flee the decay of stagnant self-content,
 The oak, ennobled by the shipwright's axe,
 The soil, which yields its marrow to the flower,
 The flower, which feeds a thousand worms,
 Born only to be prey for every bird—
 All spend themselves for others! And shall Man,
 Earth's rosy blossom—image of his God—
 Whose twofold being is the mystic knot
 Which couples Earth and Heaven—doubly bound,
 As being both worm and Angel, to that service
 By which both worms and Angels hold their life—
 Shall he, whose every breath is debt on debt,

Refuse, without some hope of further wage
Which he calls Heaven, to be what God has made him?
No! let him show himself the creature's Lord
By freewill gift of that Self-Sacrifice
Which they, perforce, by Nature's law must suffer."

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